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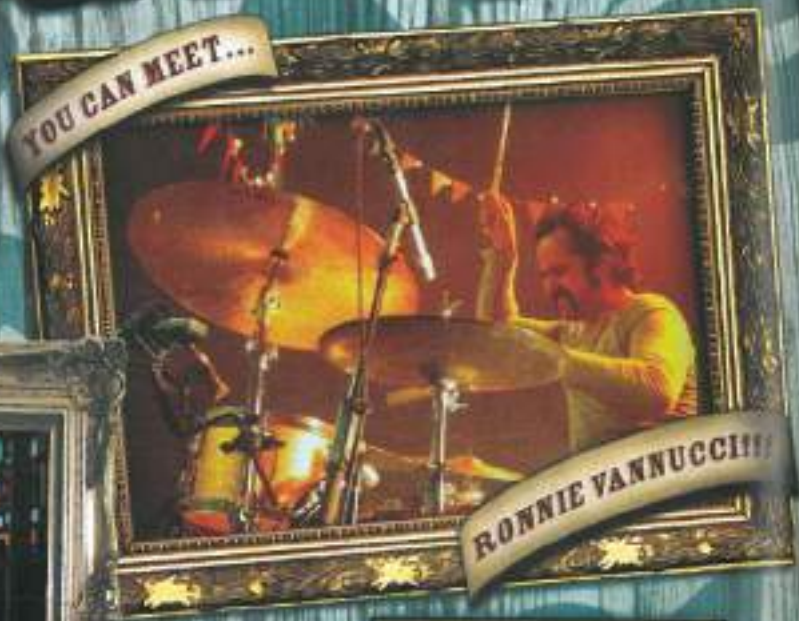

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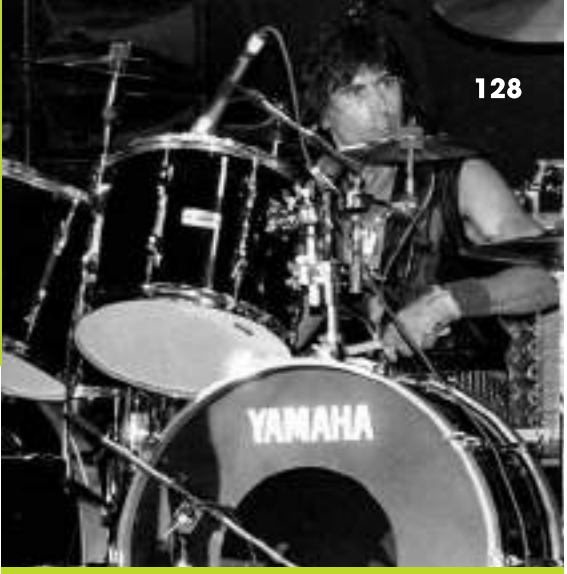

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A Friendly Challenge

One of the coolest things for me about being an editor at *Modern Drummer* is that each month I'm exposed to a *ton* of new (and old) music that I probably never would've checked out on my own. In fact, it wasn't until I took on this job that I realized how one-dimensional my tastes had become. (If it wasn't jazz or alt rock, there was little room for it in my CD collection.) But after a few months of reading interviews, checking transcriptions, and swapping CDs with my co-workers, I realized that I'd been missing out on some really incredible stuff.

For instance, this month I've kicked off each morning with a few funky break beats from Billy Martin's new box set, *illy B Eats Volumes 1–3*, while putting together his *Woodshed* article. Even though I've been a fan of Billy's drumming with Medeski Martin & Wood, I never would've thought that something as simple as a collection of grooves could be so inspiring. Now I can't wait to get my home studio up and running so I can put together some drum recordings of my own.

Then I got schooled on the roots of heavy metal as I proofed our *Off The Record* with the late/great Cozy Powell. I don't know how I missed this guy. His intro to the Rainbow track "Stargazer" is hard rock drumming at its finest.

Follow that with several afternoon brainstorming sessions with the other *MD* editors over what we felt were the most interesting double drumming tracks ever recorded, and you can start to see what I'm getting at.

So what does all of this mean to you? Well, I'd like to propose a friendly *Modern Drummer* challenge. As you're reading through the mag this month, choose an artist that you've never heard of, especially if that artist plays a style of music that you don't normally care for, and get your hands on one of their albums. Then set aside some time in your week to give the music an honest listen.

Maybe you won't find anything that gets your creative juices flowing, in which case you should feel free to pass the disc along to someone else and go back to your favorite CDs. But then again, if you dig deep enough, you may stumble onto one or two fresh ideas that'll inspire you to try something new when you get behind your kit. I know I have.

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Volume 31 Number 2

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Brad Wilk

Since Brad Wilk injected his political views into his November cover story, I'd like to respond to some of his comments regarding Cuba.

The people of Cuba are victims of a ruthless dictator. They welcome *any* form of entertainment to escape the everyday struggle for survival. As for things said about surveillance being "bullshit," they are most certainly *not*. My uncle and my father-in-law died in jail as political prisoners because of their anti-communist views.

I have relatives in Cuba who desperately need food and medicine that is only available to tourists who bring in foreign currency. There's a reason why the country is so poor, and it isn't the embargo. Fidel Castro is one of the richest people in the world. There is also a reason why men, women, and children die in the waters off Cuba, trying to get to the US on homemade rafts.

J.A. Del Valle

Joe Morello

I first heard Joe Morello perform with Dave Brubeck while I was at college in Oklahoma. Joe had speed, musicality, and creativity that no one else came close to in those days. I'll never forget the first time I saw him perform "Bossa Nova USA." He played an ostinato at break-neck speed throughout the entire song, not ghosting or faking any note, with all the accents in perfect place. And he did it all just with his left hand!

I'm proud to say that Joe and I have been friends for forty-five years. Thanks for honoring this drumming giant.

Gary Gordon

Bun E. Carlos

I absolutely tore though your November feature on Bun E. Carlos. The new *Rockford* album is classic Cheap Trick, and Bun E.'s drumming is right on the money. So was John Aldridge's story. Thanks for such a great article.

Kat Almlie

Frank Katz

Thanks for putting the wonderful Frank Katz back on my radar scope. I'm still dissecting Frank's Brand X contributions, and I intend to buy his new book and get busy with it. Thanks to ultra-funky Mike Clark for the excellent interview.

Timothy Lee Cromer

Adam's Dignified & Dangerous Editorial

Adam Budofsky *nailed* it. If we want to be revolutionary, independent, and free, we need genuine abilities. We can't handicap ourselves by being slaves to fashion, pose, or addiction. How many careers never get off the ground because some kid is trying to live like he thinks his heroes lived?

Good job, Adam. That message can't be told enough times.

Leo LaBarge

This year's college freshman class was born in 1988, and has grown up with essentially drumless music. To them, jam bands, jazz, and classic rock all sound funny, because nothing is sequenced. Their music is a reflection of their generation's values: all flash and no substance.

I hope I will be proved wrong, and that some renegade will have the courage to be different. In the meantime, it's nice to hear someone speak his mind. Keep it coming.

Jonathan Kutz

In Praise Of Blasters

I was enthralled to see your November article on blast beats. Speed metal drummers like Derek Roddy, Nick Barker, and John Longstreth are pushing the boundaries in terms of sheer speed and endurance, and it's great to see that style of music finally getting some acceptance. Thanks for hipping people to some truly innovative drumming.

Alex Cohen

Alien Abducted

The Magstar "Alien Abduction" drum reviewed in *MD*'s June 2004 issue was stolen from owner Steve Potts a few months ago in Florida. Someone recent-

ly tried to sell it for fast cash at Midwest Percussion in Chicago, but was unsuccessful. Steve would be grateful if anyone who sees it could contact him at (941) 626-9049.

Rob Kampa
Magstar Drums

Dropped Beat

The email address given for the Buddy Rich Drum Company in the November '07 *New And Notable* was incorrect. The correct address is buddyrich.cs@adelphia. com.

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Triggering An MPC 1000 Sampler

I own an Akai MPC 1000 and a Tama seven-piece Rockstar kit. I was watching a Ministry video from the late '90s and noticed the drummer had three or four pads he was playing along with the "real" kit, triggering samples from the pads. I was wondering if I can buy pads, set a MIDI channel / note number per pad, and trigger samples from my MPC. **Matt McCarthy**

Rick Long is a regular contributor to *MD* on electronic percussion subjects. Rick replies, "Pads—as well as triggers for acoustic drums—are readily available from several manufacturers. But if you want those pads to directly trigger sounds in the MPC 1000, you'll also need an analog-to-MIDI converter, to turn the analog signal from the drum pads into a digital signal that the MPC can read. A good analog-to-MIDI converter made for percussion is the Alesis Trigger iO.

A less expensive option is to purchase a used electronic kit. By doing so, you'll essentially be purchasing the pads and the converter that you need, along with another sound module thrown in. Let me explain a bit further.

Drum modules sold with electronic drumkits provide the analog-to-digital conversion necessary for the pads to trigger the modules' internal MIDI sound sources. They allow you to set the MIDI channel (channel 10 is usually the default for drums) and MIDI note numbers for each pad. Filters for threshold and response curve are also part of the picture.

Your MPC 1000 is "MIDI capable," meaning it can accept trigger signals via its MIDI In port. Drum modules can send MIDI signals through their MIDI Out ports. If you connect the MIDI Out on a drum module to the MIDI In on your MPC 1000, you'll be able to trigger the MPC from drum pads. If you want *only* the sounds from the MPC 1000, don't connect the audio out of the drum module to your amplifier. On the other hand, if you do connect the drum module to your amplifier, you could blend the module's sounds with those from the MPC 1000. You might get some great new drum sounds with that setup.

The MPC 1000 requires MIDI input signals to trigger its samples.

The Alesis Trigger iO at left is an excellent analog-to-MIDI converter. An electronic drumkit—like the Yamaha DTXpress III at right—can provide pads, analog-to-MIDI conversion, and sound options to combine with an MPC 1000 sampler.

Snare Drum Buzz

I have a six-piece Gretsch Catalina Birch kit with three rack toms and one floor tom. When I play my first and second toms, the snare drum buzzes like crazy. I have tried de-tuning and re-tuning all of my drums. Nothing seems to help. I'd sincerely appreciate any help you can offer. **Brian Long**

Snare drum buzz is the result of something called "sympathetic vibration." The heads of your toms and your snare are tuned closely enough that they will vibrate at the same frequency. Hitting the toms causes their heads to generate that frequency (among others). The head of the snare drum picks up the vibration and makes the snares buzz.

You can generally reduce snare buzz by changing the tuning of one or both drums so that they are tuned farther apart, thus reducing the "sympathy" between the drums. You can also reduce the snare sensitivity on the snare drum by de-tuning (slightly!) the lugs on either side of the snare wires on the snare-side head. We've also heard of drummers who applied a bit of duct tape on the snare-side head to achieve the same goal. Sometimes, tightening the snare wires a bit serves to reduce their "buzz factor." However, this will alter the snare response of the drum.

Sympathetic vibration is an inherent factor with an acoustic drumset. The very factors that make a good drum sound—resonance, a full frequency range, and sensitivity—can contribute to the problem. When you're playing by yourself, it can be an annoyance. Fortunately, when you're playing with a band, the buzz generally cannot be heard.

COREY PIERCE
God Forbid
VINNIE FIORELLO
Less Than Jake
SCOTT PHILLIPS
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TERREON GULLY
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Far left: Vinnie Colaiuta's gear is stacked in storage at Drummers Paradise in Los Angeles. Left: Multiple snare drums are often stored on their sides for easy access, as shown here at Drummers Paradise.

How To Stack Drums

When storing drums—particularly snare and bass drums—in cases, is it better to lay them on their sides, or position them with their drumheads facing down toward the ground? I notice that snare drums are often stored on their sides on shelves. **Gary Schneider**

Generally speaking, it's better to store drums laying flat. The shells are stronger in that configuration, and they can support more weight. Also, an entire drumkit can be stacked this way, in order to be stored in the floor space taken by the bass drum alone. If the drums are in cases, so much the better, since the cases can take the brunt of the "stacked" weight. Otherwise, a strain will be put on the drumheads.

When you see multiple snare drums stored on their sides, it's usually for practical purposes. They take up less room on shelves that way, and they can easily be removed without needing to first move other drums. Since snare drum shells are generally thicker than tom or bass drum shells, the risk of their going out of round due to this storage position is minimal.

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

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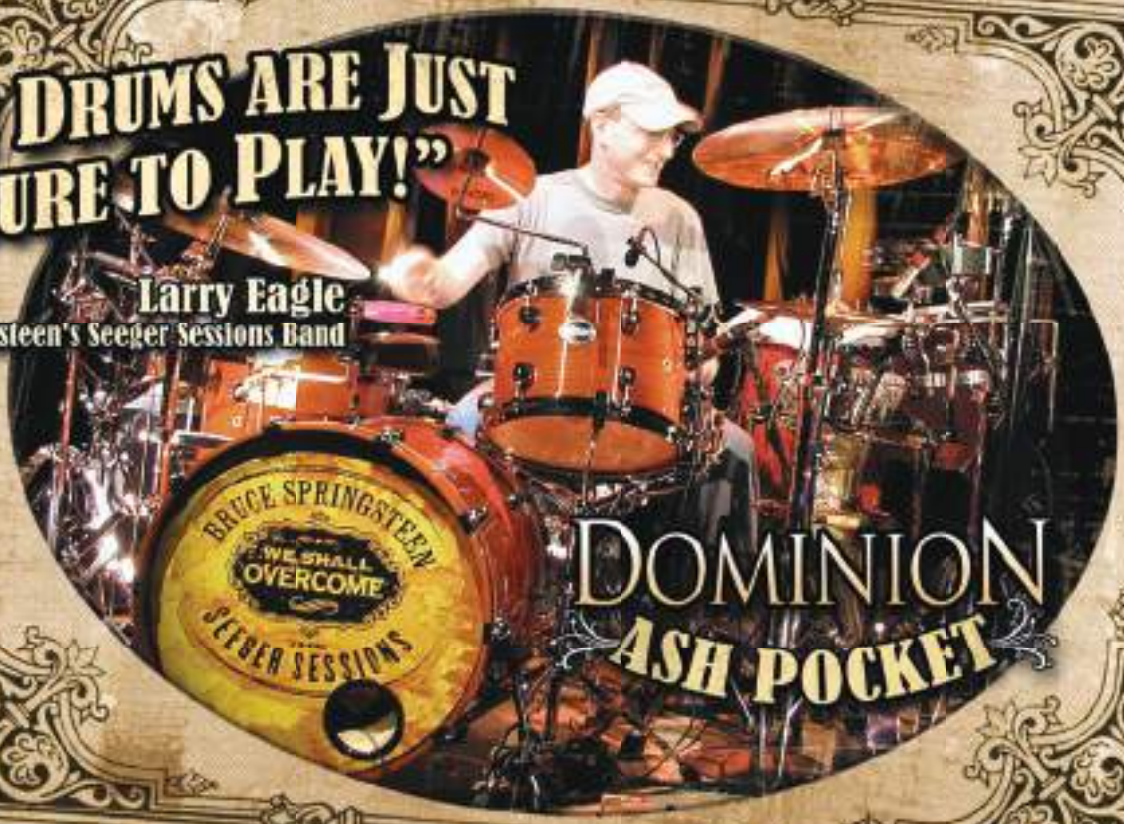

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Jazz Great
Bill Stewart's
Ride Cymbal Sound

Q You have a really clear ride cymbal beat. Can you describe how you get such a clear sound, and how I can practice that? It looks like you employ the fingers to get some snap on the third partial of the triplet. Do you do the same thing on up tempos, or does your approach change?

Scott Cummings

A Thanks for listening, Scott. I'm glad that my ride cymbal sound is reaching you clearly.

When I was about eighteen, I played the cymbal with a palm-down grip, with my thumb off to the side. I was attending the University Of Northern Iowa, and Steve Houghton was there as a guest clinician. He heard me play and commented that he thought I'd get a thicker sound out of the cymbal if I changed my grip so that my thumb was on top. Old habits are hard to break, so I couldn't make the change immediately.

About a year later, I moved east to attend William Paterson College in New Jersey. At that time, I bought a rather thin 20" K Zildjian cymbal in a pawnshop. Previously I'd been using a very heavy ride cymbal, on which attack was never a problem—though the cymbal lacked finesse. My new cymbal had a pretty, dark sound, but its attack was fairly soft. I was playing in a variety of groups, including a big band, so I had to figure out how to make the stick sound of that cymbal project. I would sometimes practice playing the cymbal by itself, at all volumes and tempos. Ultimately, my grip evolved to a thumb-up style similar to what I use today.

If I want a dryer, more pinpoint definition out of a cymbal, I'll use a fairly tight grip between my thumb and forefinger. (But not uncomfortably tight. No tendonitis, please!) I might loosen that grip a bit on a slower tempo, when I want the cymbal to open up more.

I use my fingers to help propel the stick and to control its bounce. But I still keep a fairly tight grip between my thumb and forefinger. At slow and medium tempos, I sometimes make each stroke without any bounce, using more of a closed grip with very little finger movement. Other times, I'll use a bit of fingers at those tempos, which gets a little more open sound. At faster tempos, I'm relying more on the rebound of the stick, so the fingers become more essential to propel the stick and control the bounce.

There are a variety of great drummers who get good sounds out of their cymbals, and they're all a bit different from each other. Of course, it does help to find good cymbals. But the way a cymbal is played is critically important to the sound.

Nate Morton's
SuperNova Setup

Q First, I have to give props to the man of The House Band. The power and energy you put into the *Rockstar SuperNova* show is awesome! Can you tell me about your setup for the show, including drums, cymbals, heads, tuning, miking...*everything.*

Andy Hooper

A Thanks for the compliments. I have a great time playing on the show, and I'm stoked that you enjoy it.

My drumset is a Pearl Reference Series kit in Scarlet Fade finish. The primary kick is a 24" and the auxiliary kick is a 20". The snares are a $6\frac{1}{2}$x14 Reference solid brass and a $6\frac{1}{2}$x13 Reference wood snare in Granite Sparkle. The toms are 12", 13", 16", and 18". The hardware is all Pearl, including an Icon rack and two twin pedals, one of which is set up so that the slave pedal plays the auxiliary 20" kick. The batter heads are Remo coated Ambassadors on the toms, coated Pinstripes on the snares, and clear PowerStroke 3s on the kicks.

The cymbals are all Zildjian, including A Custom and K crashes, in addition to a 22" K Custom ride, a 20" Oriental Crash Of Doom, a 20" Z Custom China, a 20" Oriental China Trash, 12" A Custom Master Sound hats, and 16" hats made from a 16" A Custom crash on top and a 16" Z Custom crash on the bottom. I also use a variety of Rhythm Tech percussion equipment including shakers, tambourines, and a djembe. I was using a Roland SPD-S to start and stop loops. For sticks I'm currently playing Zildjian wood-tip 5Bs.

I don't have a tuning method, outside of evenly tensioning the lugs. I try to get the drums to sound as open and resonant as possible. If I want them to sound more round, I tune the bottom head down until I get a flappy sound, then I go up a little from there.

When I'm in my studio, I make the decisions on what mics get used. But for the TV show it wasn't my call, so I didn't really pay much attention to the miking setup. I just did my best not to hit 'em.

For more information, you can check out the show's Web site, rockstar.msn.com. On the home page there's a video of me giving a complete rundown of all my gear. Also, the Pearl Drums site has an up-to-date gear list of the drums and hardware.

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TODD SUCHERMAN

iStyle

Text and photo by Joe Perry

Influences: Tony Williams, Steve Smith, Vinnie Colaiuta
Hobbies/interests: Books, movies, collecting snare drums
Pets I have: Cleo and Stoney (cats)
Favorite food: Sushi
Favorite junk food: Hot dogs
Favorite drink: X.O. cognac
Favorite TV shows: *Six Feet Under, Arrested Development*
Favorite movie: *Broadway Danny Rose*
Favorite album: *Revolver* (The Beatles)
Other instruments I play: none
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: Lost!
Most prized possession: My dad's 1969 Slingerland drumset
Songs I wish I'd played on: Pete Townshend's "Somebody Saved Me"
Musician I'd like to work with: Peter Gabriel
Next up-and-coming drummer: Pastor Steve Michaud
Person I'd like to have a conversation with: My friend Ben, who recently passed away
Most embarrassing moment on stage: Slipped and fell on the drumset while saying goodbye to the crowd
Most memorable performance: Recorded a track with Brian Wilson that Paul McCartney would be playing on
Most unusual venue played: Field Museum in Chicago, by the dinosaur display.

ASK A PRO

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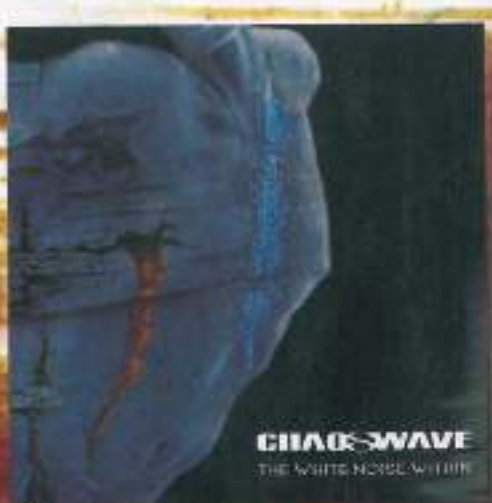

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John Blackwell
Helping JT Bring SexyBack

John Blackwell had a problem most drummers wouldn't mind dealing with. Does he wait around for Prince to decide what his next adventure will be? Or does he work on his solo record, *Forever Jia* (dedicated to his late daughter). "I'm really looking forward to finishing this project," John says, excitedly. "I wrote all the songs except for the title track, and I think it really shows a different side of me."

There was another option for John: He could stay at home with his wife, play with their one-year-old twins and three-year-old son, and fly back and forth to Boston to teach at his old alma mater, the Berklee College Of Music. But after Prince, where does one go?

While John was weighing his options, he got a call from superstar and former N' Sync heartthrob Justin Timberlake to do a promo tour. It began in the summer of '06 and has turned into a major world tour, which is just about to kick off.

JT's latest CD, *FutureSex/LoveSounds*, completed before John signed on, has already reached number-one—as has its first single, "SexyBack." "The tour is going great," John enthuses, "and musically it's not much different from Prince. It's mainly about playing in front of twenty thousand people and making them dance."

Justin was familiar with John's playing, having seen him when he toured with Prince on the *Musicology* tour. "As big a star as Justin is," John says, "he's easy to work for and also one of the coolest people on the planet. And with him being a drummer, like Prince, he understands the pocket."

John is still on good terms with his former boss and says it's not impossible that one day they may play together again. "I understand that Prince has many options," John admits. "I respect him and I'm honored that I lasted seven years with the man. I learned from him. But just like he wants to do something new, I also want to try something new."

Before JT's tour, John recorded with yet another superstar, mogul/rapper Diddy for his latest CD, *Press Play*. "I cut twenty-four tracks, five of which were chosen for the record."

So, it's all seemed to work out. As John sums up, "I'm continuously busy, which is what I wanted."

Billy Amendola

John Van Ness

Pete Wilhoit
Feeling The Sting Of Fiction Plane

Matthew Brown

In 2004, after playing with the band Fiction Plane for a year, Pete Wilhoit was offered a position to be the only American member of the all-British band. FYI, Fiction Plane's lead singer, Joe Sumner, is Sting's son.

Originally from Indiana, Wilhoit grew up taking drum lessons from studio drumming heavyweights Kenny Aronoff and Shawn Pelton. Both drummers recommended Pete for Fiction Plane. "Each of them contacted me about the band," Wilhoit explains. "So I drove to New York and auditioned for the gig.

"I think the guys in the band were surprised at how well we all got along," Phil continues. "So eventually they made me a permanent member. I think what I bring to the band is a varied playing style. I've done all sorts of gigs. I have a jazz degree, and I was with a rock band called The Cutters for ten years. I think I bring a musicality and power to the band. I'm definitely a musician first. I help write the music, and I'm concerned with the song first and the drums second."

Recently back from a tour opening for Sting, Wilhoit gushes, "It was *amazing*. Twenty-nine shows in twenty-five countries. Amazing cities, venues, and crowds. We estimated that we played in front of around 500,000 people on this tour. Olympic Stadium in Moscow was definitely a highlight, as was getting to play 'Next To You' with Sting and the band at the end of the tour."

Wilhoit is currently in the studio recording with the band. "I think this next one will be a true 'rock' album," the drummer says. "We're going to lean into the guitar trio thing with full force. There may be a hint of keys and some delicate moments, but most songs will have a good solid guitar riff with rocking bass and drums. Joe's voice can cut through just about anything, so look to hear some serious chops from him as well."

Robyn Flans

Hurt's Evan Johns The Time Of His Life

Evan Johns says the last two and a half years have been a long journey for his band, Hurt. "There was a lot of not eating, yelling, and screaming, 'I don't know what I'm going to do, man,'" Johns reports. "We just kept moving forward, though, believing in the music and passing out different demos. All of a sudden Capital was interested." Johns adds that even while they were recording demos and sending them out, he and the lead singer were still putting together the band.

Capital came on board in July of 2005, although Hurt had recorded their debut on their own. "You can call it a demo," Johns says. "But the record company loved it. They said, 'Let's just get it mixed and mastered and put it out there.'"

Among Evan's favorite tracks are "Danse Russe." "I love how melodic it is," he admits. "It was really fun doing the drum tracks on that one. I got to mess around with all sorts of recording techniques. I'm a big fan of mallets on toms. I was also using brushes, samples—all sorts of stuff. I did a lot of that on 'House Carpenter' and 'Forever,' too. The whole recording process of the drums was trial and error, with no preconceived ideas. I got a lot of that from watching my dad [famed producer Andy Johns]. He would try all sorts of things while recording drums."

Twenty-five-year-old Evan began playing drums at four, and whenever he visited his father at "the office," he was drawn to the drums. "Back in the '80s, drummers were really into big drumkits, and there were a lot of things to hit. It was the most fun time of my life."

Johns says he enjoyed watching such drummers as Gregg Bissonette with Joe Satriani, Fred Coury from Cinderella, and Alex Van Halen. "I would just sit and stare at Alex's drumkit and watch all the different miking techniques. I can remember when Alex was using ride cymbals for top hi-hats. I was always going into my 'study,' as we called it, and practicing drums so I could become one of the club and hang out with the adults."

With Hurt, Evan says, "I'm having the time of my life. It's a lot more work than I expected, but it's also a lot more fun than I expected." **Robyn Flans**

Billy Ficca Too Busy For Television

John Nikolai

After Television emerged from New York's punk underground in 1977 with their landmark *Marquee Moon* album—a sly balance of dissonance and melody, which became a template for The Strokes, Sonic Youth, Interpol, and countless others—they never really toured much. Odd, then, that since Television is now basically a part-time concern squeezed between the members' other projects, they're touring somewhat regularly and visiting exotic ports of call like Brazil, Iceland, and Russia.

"We played in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and we met some people who knew about Television from way back—when nobody was touring there," recalls drummer Billy Ficca, the anchor in Television's sea of wiry guitar improv. "It was interesting to know they'd even heard of us. We transcended the Iron Curtain. Mustn't have been made out of very heavy material."

Ficca's unique drumming—a solid yet spacious style equally informed by jazz greats like Elvin Jones and rock icons like John Bonham—is key to the languid, noir-ish instrumentals on Television singer-guitarist Tom Verlaine's recently released solo disc, *Around*. Not that Ficca recalls exactly how it all went down, seeing as the album was recorded in the late '90s.

"It was a lot of improvisation," Billy says. "I don't know how many takes we did of each song. I do remember saying, 'Well, I'd like to do another take,' and Tom would say, 'Nah, that's okay.' Tom would sort of have a basic arrangement in mind and we'd go off from there."

As for future studio collaborations with Verlaine under the Television moniker, Ficca is uncertain, if for no other reason than all the principals have a fairly full plate. "A while ago we were working on new stuff," he explains. "But people get busy with their own projects, so I just don't know when that's going to go; there are no immediate plans. It might happen, or it might not happen at all." **Patrick Berkery**

Evan Stone

Breaking Sticks & Stones

For Evan Stone, his new jazz CD, *Sticks & Stone, Vol. 1,* is the culmination of a seventeen-year dream. "I didn't feel ready until recently," the drummer admits. "But in the last couple of years I've felt it was time to put something down."

Stone says the album's songs come from the accumulation of his many years of gigs, as well as from the pens of his bandmates. "When we did the sessions for the CD," he says, "I put together four different groups, recorded about thirty tunes, and picked out nine that I thought worked."

The recording is fresh and original, and Stone says it was done completely live, sans overdubs. "This is improvised jazz," Stone urges. "What you hear is what you get. There is one track, 'KCAMS,' that I had to splice because the computer went down during a perfect take."

Stone cites the cut "For My Friends" as one of his favorites. "I think there's a lot of really good interplay between the players. I love 'KCAMS' and 'Cheesecake' too. But really, I love all the tunes. Playing with these musicians is such fun, and when you're in the moment, it's, 'Man, these guys are making it happen.'"

For Stone, the entire process was intense, from doing the recording to having to promote the project himself. "It's a do-it-yourself world now," he says. "It's exciting because you're in control, but when you're an artist, when do you have time to do your art? It's tough to find the balance."

Stone recently invested in a home studio, so he'll be able to start working on *Volume 2*. In the meantime, he's been working in the pop world with Aly & AJ, as well as with Greg Adams of Tower Of Power. "That's another childhood dream of mine, playing with Tower," he says. "But the next best thing is playing with their trumpet player. I just keep busy with these kinds of things and with my own band."

Robyn Flans

John Gilhooley

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NEWS

Billy Cobham's latest disc, *Drum 'N' Voice 2*, shows the mighty one focusing on laying down some fat grooves. Produced by Nicolosi Novecento for his "Just Groove" series, the disc features Buddy Miles, Frank Gambale, **Airto Moreira**, Jeff Berlin, and many others.

The great **Leroy Clouden** lays it down on Goat's new one, *Twisted Heart*.

Eddie Bayers, Steve Brewster, Eric Darken, and **Paul Leim** are all on Bob Seger's latest, *Face The Promise*.

Singer/songwriter Wendy Starland's latest hit, "Dancing With The Sea," features **Joe Bonadio** on drums.

Michael Bland is on Jonny Lang's latest, *Turn Around,* as well as Clay Aiken's *A Thousand Different Ways.*

Ringo Starr and **Jim Keltner** double drum on the reissued George Harrison CD/DVD combo, *Living In The Material World*. To hear Jim speak about the recording, visit www.georgeharrison.com.

Speaking of **Ringo**, he's also revisited on the new Beatles CD, *LOVE*. The disc contains experimental mixes from the original master tapes by Beatles producer George Martin and his son Giles.

Country superstar Alan Jackson has a new CD, *Like A Red On Rose*, produced by Alison Krauss. It features **Bernard Purdie** on drums.

Kenny Aronoff is on the latest recordings by Meat Loaf, Rod Stewart, Avril Lavigne, Jake Owen, Jesse McCartney, Steve Rider, and George Canyon.

Athena Lee (Tommy's sister) is on Kottak's debut, *Therupy*.

Teacher/jazz drummer **Tony Inzalaco** has a new CD, *Real Life Real Live*. The disc was recorded in concert with his quintet (with drummer **Jimmy Branly** behind the board) at Alva's in San Pedro, California.

Terry Clarke is on Nancy Wilson's *Turned To Blue*.

Jimmy Cobb is on Geri Allen's *Timeless Portraits And Dreams*.

Tony Braunagel is on *Maria Muldaur Sings Love Songs Of Bob Dylan*.

Joey Waronker is on *Full Moon Cigarette* by Gran Bel Fisher.

Stephen Belans produced and played drums on Mike Rosenthal's latest, *Home*.

The Andy Biskin Quartet's *Early American: The Melodies Of Stephen Foster* features **John Hollenbeck** on drums.

Ralph Molina is on *Live At The Fillmore East*, a 1970 date by Neil Young & Crazy Horse.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Chick Webb was born on 2/10/09.

Baby Dodds passed away on 2/14/59, **Karen Carpenter** on 2/4/83, **Tony Williams** on 2/23/97, **Keith Knudsen** (Doobie Brothers) on 2/8/05, and percussionist **Ray Barretto** on 2/17/06.

On 2/21/54, **Art Blakey**'s quintet, with trumpeter Clifford Brown, records *Live At Birdland*.

On 2/1/67, **Yamaha** begins making handcrafted drums.

In February of '81, **Pro-Mark** begins American hickory drumstick production in Houston, Texas.

On 2/23/87, **GMS** create their first line of custom drums, the Grand Master series.

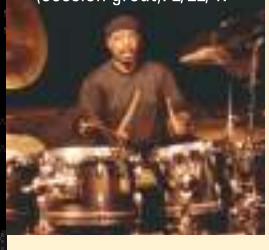
On 2/18/06, The Rolling Stones (with **Charlie Watts** on drums) play their biggest concert ever, as more than 1.2 million fans show up on Brazil's Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Hal Blaine
(studio legend): 2/5/29

Mick Avory
(The Kinks): 2/15/44

Harvey Mason
(session great): 2/22/47



Joe English
(Wings): 2/7/49

Nigel Olsson
(Elton John): 2/10/49

Jerry Shirley
(Humble Pie): 2/4/52

Robin Bachman
(Bachman Turner Overdrive): 2/18/53

Manny Elias
(Tears For Fears, Julian Lennon): 2/21/53

Vinnie Colaiuta
(drum giant): 2/5/56

Gregg Field
(jazz great): 2/21/56

Jerry Marotta
(ex–Peter Gabriel): 2/6/57

Simon Phillips
(Toto): 2/6/57

Taylor Hawkins
(Foo Fighters): 2/10/68

Pat Wilson
(Weezer): 2/1/69

Ron Welty
(The Offspring): 2/1/71

Johnny Rabb
(independent): 2/29/72

Scott Phillips
(Alter Bridge): 2/22/73

Teddy Campbell
(*American Idol*): 2/24/75

Cyrus Bolooki
(New Found Glory): 2/27/80

MD RADIO

To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

Chris Pennie | Dillinger Escape Plan

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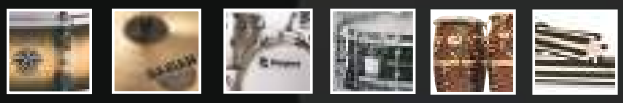

Tama Warlord Snare Drums

Hammers Of The Drum Gods

by Mike Haid

KEY NOTES

- Beautifully crafted snare drums in a variety of materials
- Unique sculptured lugs and emblems inlayed with Swarovski crystals
- Versatile tuning range and superior sound quality

Tama has gone "way retro" on this new line of snare drums by summoning ancient warriors of Africa, Greece, Scandinavia, and the Roman Empire to represent their vision. Each drumshell is designed to reflect distinctive characteristics of those warriors and the cultures they represent.

Crystal Clear

Warlord drums clearly stand out due to their articulately sculptured gothic tube-style lugs and Warlord emblems. What's more, the lugs and emblems are inlayed with dazzling crystals by Swarovski, an Austrian company famous for their high-quality custom crystal. How cool is that? The lugs and the emblem were designed by Tama's Takanori Hoshino, with a look that combines an unusual art deco–meets–gothic style.

The Same, But Different

Although each Warlord drum is unique in appearance, they all share certain characteristics. Each drum is 6x14 in size, with ten lugs, an Evans G1 coated batter head, and an Evans Hazy 300 snare-side head. They all come with the same antique brushed black nickel hardware, which is exclusive to the Warlord series. The two wood-shell drums share the same lug and emblem design, while the two metal drums share a slightly different version.

All four drums are fitted with Tama's Star-Cast hoops (made of die-cast zinc), as well as Hi-Carbon Steel Snappy Snares designed to produce crisp, articulate, and warm snare response. The smooth, dual-adjustable strainer/butt mechanisms are

From left: Masai, Valkyrie, and Spartan snare drums

common to many Tama snare drums, but the Warlord model matches the antique brushed black nickel hardware. These are all high-end hardware items designed and constructed with the highest standards on the market.

It should be said at the outset that treasures like these don't come cheap. This is especially true of the one Warlord snare that was *not* sent for review, which is the Praetorian model. That drum features Tama's famous 3 mm–thick bell brass shell, and it goes for a lofty list price of $2,599.99. But don't let that scare you off, oh great drum warrior! The other three Warlord drums are much more affordable than the Praetorian. So, let's examine that trio.

The Masai

It is said that in order to earn the right to obtain a wife, a Masai warrior was required to slay a lion. In the past, young Masai boys were required to build a village and live in it for years as part of the rite of passage to manhood. (And you think you've got it tough mowing the lawn and washing the car?)

The most striking characteristic of Tama's Masai snare drum is the magnificent African Twilight finish, which is darker in the center of the shell and fades to the top and bottom, revealing the rich, thick (12-ply/10-mm) African bubinga wood. Set against the sculptured antique black-nickel hardware with dark crystal inlays, the outer ply of quilted bubinga is visually captivating.

The bulky Star-Cast hoops, coupled with the hefty shell, make this a physically heavy drum (as are *all* the Warlord drums). The dense bubinga shell produces a powerful attack and a slightly warmer tone than does maple, especially when the heads are tuned down to a lower pitch. This drum possesses excellent articulation and tuning range.

The Valkyrie

In Nordic mythology, the Valkyries were beautiful spear-wielding female warriors who served the god Odin. Their purpose was to carry heroic male warriors who died in battle to Valhalla, where they would remain until called upon to fight alongside Odin in the preordained battle at the end of the world.

The bold, blonde beauty of the Valkyrie is represented in the Warlord series by the namesake drum's 15-ply maple shell—the thickest maple ply shell that Tama has ever made. A striking outer ply reveals the natural blonde finish in the center, which then becomes increasingly hidden at the top and bottom of the shell beneath a smoked lacquer border.

The thick, dense shell and die-cast hoops of the Valkyrie make it a bright, singing drum, with an articulate, focused tone

that cuts almost like a metal drum. There are no sweet spots in the tuning range of Warlord drums. It's sweet across the board, from high and pingy, to fat and punchy.

The Spartan

Many historians consider the Spartan warriors of ancient Greece to be the strongest, bravest, and most disciplined soldiers to ever live. Spartan boys were trained from infancy to show bravery. If they displayed any signs of weakness, they were put to death by their own mothers.

The Spartan drum's massive 1-mm stainless-steel shell is strong and powerful. It features a special sound edge pitched at about 65°, created to emulate the edges found on vintage metal snare drums. This drum rings like a bell. And, as with the other two Warlords, the tuning range is spectacular.

The shell surface of the Spartan is visually magnificent. It features a brushed metal center, with mirror-smooth stainless steel above and below. While the Masai and Valkyrie wood drums are highlighted with dark crystal-inlayed hardware, the Spartan shines brightly with its diamond-like Swarovski crystal settings. This shining metal shell would obviously be the most versatile in terms of blending visually with practically any kit.

Overall

From the seductive blonde maple of the Valkyrie, to the dark and mysterious African bubinga of the Masai, to the bold, shining brilliance of the stainless-steel Spartan, the Warlord snare drums are magnificent sights to behold. The gothic antique hardware design may not appeal to everyone, but that's what sets these drums apart from the crowd.

Sonically and structurally, I found no faults with any of our review models. Their tuning range covered the spectrum from fat and beefy to high-pitched and piercing, with excellent articulation and projection throughout.

These are finely crafted, high-end boutique drums that offer innovative design and world-class sound. They're pricey, but no more so than any other comparably equipped high-end snare drums on the market. If your taste runs in the directions of "ancient, mysterious, exotic, and adventurous," then you owe it to yourself to confront these Warlords.

THE NUMBERS

Masai (bubinga shell, African Twilight finish)	$899.99
Valkyrie (maple shell, Nordic Woods finish)	$899.99
Spartan (stainless steel, brushed/mirror finish)	$899.99
Praetorian (bell brass, not reviewed)	$2,599.99

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A Sabian Sampler

New Rides, Hats, And Hand Crashes

by Rick Van Horn

KEY NOTES

- Raw Bell Dry ride offers musicality with strong projection
- Vault Hats offer outstanding spread and response
- Picante crashes are super-responsive and versatile

Sabian is nothing if not eclectic. Their latest batch of new releases includes two distinctly different rides, a set of surprising hi-hats, and two sizes of the most original crash cymbal design we've seen in a long time. Let's take a look at this mixed bag.

21" AA Raw Bell Dry Ride

Once you've managed to speak this cymbal's lengthy name, you've pretty much described it. Sabian's Raw Bell ride design was introduced originally in their dark, traditional Hand Hammered series. Requests quickly came in for a cymbal that had the same basic character, but with a brighter, more cutting overall sound. So Sabian took the same design into their machine-hammered AA line.

The 21" Raw Bell Dry ride is a medium-heavy cymbal with what Sabian calls "wide-blade" lathing around the unlathed bell (top and bottom). The bell itself is fairly large in diameter but not particularly domed. Our review cymbal featured a brilliant finish; a natural finish is also available.

Sound-wise, our Raw Bell Dry test model proved to be an amalgam of sonic characteristics. Its AA pedigree gave it brightness and projection. Its unlathed bell produced a very clear, high-pitched (and truly bell-like) "ding" that would penetrate almost anything. But because that bell is somewhat shallow (and unlathed), the cymbal had a dryer stick response and less sustain than you might expect from a ride of this size and weight. Sabian describes this model as having "power and definition to deliver a kick of energy." I'd go along with that, adding that the cymbal also generated a deep undertone that rumbled beneath any sustained ride pattern.

Given the 21" AA Raw Bell Dry ride's size, weight, and performance characteristics, it's definitely not a subtle cym-

bal. But neither is it a purely volume-oriented power plate. I could see it working well in amplified pop, R&B, or rock situations where equal measures of musicality, clarity, and projection are desired.

20" Vault Ride

When Sabian introduced their Vault crash a while ago, they said that it had "The sound of the silver slicing through the music." The new 20" Vault ride is intended to offer that same characteristic, along with "glassy, clean response at every volume." The cymbal's design combines pinpoint lathing on the top with a raw, unlathed bottom that displays rows of very tiny machine-hammering marks. The bell is fairly flat. Our review model featured a brilliant finish on top.

According to Sabian: "The raw bottom tightens up the overall response, so the sound created by a stick hitting the top is crisp, clear, and projected without the vibration of the cymbal creating too much wash and reducing that clarity." According to our tests: yes and no.

Actually, the Vault ride was a bit of an enigma. For a top-lathed brilliant cymbal, it had a dark overall tonality and a decidedly dry sound. (One *MD* editor commented that it almost sounded like a flat ride.) Yet it had a bright, cutting bell sound. The stick definition was as advertised: clear and defined at all volume levels. But there was an underlying gongy tone—not a wash as much as a hum—that came to the fore with sustained playing.

The *MD* editors were divided on this cymbal. Some described it as having a good, controlled sound and a pleasing low tonality. Others found it dull and a little unmusical. It's a clear case of beauty being in the ear of the beholder.

14" Vault Hats

The 14" Vault hats pair a medium top cymbal and a heavy bottom. The top cymbal has pinpoint lathing on both surfaces; the bottom cymbal is lathed on its top and unlathed on its underside.

This time, Sabian's own description is right on the money: "The sound is bright and crisp, with the top cymbal light enough to be sensitive, yet capable of creating a synergy with the bottom cymbal that boosts overall response with solid sticking and full, glassy character at higher volumes." Sabian also states that the cymbals are responsive at lower volume levels. But their weight, thickness, and projection seem to point more toward effective use in high-energy pop or moderate rock.

Sabian touts the sibilant "tssssss" created by these Vault models, and rightly so. Just to take advantage of that sound, I tried turning the hi-hats over, with the heavier bottom cymbal on the top. Boy, did *that* create a sibilant washy spread—to say nothing of a terrific "chick" sound with the foot. If I were a rock player looking to get a musical quality out of my hi-hats at high volume, this would be a great way to do it.

AAX El Sabor Picante Hand Crashes

I appreciate a product that can be used to advantage in situations that it wasn't necessarily designed for. That's the case with the new AAX El Sabor Picante Hand Crashes. But first let's talk about what they *were* designed for.

The 16" and 18" Picante Hand Crashes were created in conjunction with Santana percussionist Karl Perazzo. Each cymbal features three distinct playing surfaces. There's a raw, unhammered bell for playing clavé with a stick, and an unlathed medium-weight center area that can also be played with a stick for a dry ride sound. The outer half of the cymbal is heavily lathed, making it very thin and responsive to slaps by hand. The edge of the cymbal isn't really intended to be struck with a stick at full intensity. (More on that later.)

We tested Picante crashes of each size, and we were impressed by how sensitive the overall crash response was. The slightest touch with a finger set the lathed portion of the cymbal into vibration, producing a full-sounding crash at even the lowest volume. A firm slap produced a bright, penetrating crash that brought the rest of the cymbal into play.

The bell and ride sounds on the Picantes aren't going to replace those of a traditional ride cymbal. But they're fine for the sort of rhythmic accenting likely to be provided by a percussionist. Not surprisingly, these sounds were stronger and more defined on the 18" model than on the 16". If a percussionist planned to do a lot of stick work (along with timbales, for example), the 18" would be the best choice. But either size (or both) would be a great addition to a percussion setup for a conguero or other hand percussionist.

Now, about that situation that the Picante crashes *weren't* designed for. I frequently play drums and percussion in local theatrical productions—generally in small venues where volume is an issue. Invariably, when the score calls for a cymbal crash, a traditional crash cymbal is too loud. I took the 16" Picante crash on one of these shows recently, and I was extremely pleased to discover that I could play it with sticks (lightly!), rods, or even brushes, and get a genuine crash response that stayed within required volume limits. This crash sound was fairly splashy—almost trashy—which is to be expected from an extremely thin cymbal. But it was decidedly *not* an unmusical sound, and it allowed me to serve the score while keeping the musical director happy.

Wrapping Up

The variation of sonic characteristics and performance displayed by our review cymbals is a testimony to Sabian's creative approach to cymbalmaking. To my ear, the AA Raw Bell Dry ride, Vault hats, and Picante crashes are all winners (with special kudos to the Picante crashes for usefulness above and beyond the call). I wasn't partial to the Vault ride, but other *MD* editors were, and that's what musical choices are all about. It's great to *have* those choices available to us.

THE NUMBERS

21" AA Raw Bell Dry ride	$439
20" Vault ride	$448
14" Vault hats	$538
16" AAX El Sabor Picante Hand crash	$293
18" AAX El Sabor Picante Hand crash	$343

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Tempus CarbonFibre Drumkit And Fiberglass Snare

Un-Natural Shells, Mighty Tone

by T. Bruce Wittet

KEY NOTES

- Spectacular glitter finish/gel coat
- Wide dynamic and tuning ranges
- Very responsive even at the lowest volumes
- Durable and resistant to climate and humidity

Tempus Drums is a small Vancouver, Canada–based company that evolved out of Milestone, a boutique manufacturer in the late 1970s and early '80s. Milestone fiberglass drums are the stuff of legend, but they had design problems that ultimately caused the demise of the company. So when drummer/builder Paul Mason took over in 1985, he faced a few rough years as he set out to establish his new brand. But by 1995 Tempus was here to stay.

Tempus fans exhibit a devotion approaching religious fervor. I was keen to review the drums in order to learn why. I also wanted to evaluate Tempus's "Un-natural" mantra, which greets visitors to the company's Web site.

Although Tempus is still known mainly for fiberglass drums, Paul Mason has

expanded the line to feature an even more high-tech material: carbon fiber (referred to in the Canadian spelling as CarbonFibre). Our review kit consisted of an 8x12 rack tom, a 14x14 floor tom on legs, a 16x20 bass drum, and a 5x14 snare drum—all featuring carbon fiber shells finished in Champagne Bronze Glitter. Just for the sake of Tempus tradition, we were also sent a 5x14 fiberglass snare finished in Royal Blue Glitter.

Glittering Deeply

The Champagne Bronze Glitter finish is stunning—a "glass glitter" as opposed to a sparkle, with great depth. When lit with halogen spots, the combination of grays, chromes, bronzes, silvers, and blacks was so compelling that visiting drummers responded with "oohs" and "ahhhs." As opposed to being a wrap, the glitter is a gel coat that's actually part of the shell. It's the first thing to go inside a cylindrical mold. Once the finish cures, the rest of the shell is laid up within that mold.

Paul Mason invited me to test the durability of the finish in a curious fashion: Take the blunt end of a stick and give the drum a thrashing. He's done this at trade shows, with no blemishes resulting. I took his word for it.

Here's The Skinny

Tempus fiberglass drum shells are about $^{3}/_{16}$" thick. Their carbon fiber shells are approximately 30% thinner, at $^{5}/_{32}$". They're so thin, in fact, that conventional bearing edge profiles don't work. So Tempus opts for a rounded-over edge somewhat reminiscent of the long end of an egg. This allows as much head as possible to rest on the shell.

The ultra-thin carbon fiber shells are also quite light. Even bass drums are a breeze to transport. But are they going to collapse when your guitar player gets frisky and decides to stand atop your kit? Paul Mason assured me that his drums have never collapsed or cracked, over a long history of gigging. Furthermore, they're stable in the face of changes in temperature and humidity. What this means is that a drummer can play a thin, light shell—gaining the resonance and sub-lows that such shells produce—without worrying that the shell will bend, warp, or crack.

Drum Hardware

Tempus's distinctive coffin-shaped lugs are springless die-cast pieces with flat, reflective faces devoid of the usual scoring or striations. The single-tom holder is a DW rail-mount model, which does everything its 1960s predecessors did and then some. It's classy, retro, and infinitely adjustable. All moving parts lock firmly with a few quick turns of the wing nuts.

Spurs and floor-tom legs are solid, generic units. Paul will mount other hardware on your custom drumkit (including a mini version of the coffin lug), but I liked this combination very much for its workaday functionality. There were no suspension mounts or drum cradles—nor any need for them. It seemed that nothing would prevent these drums from resonating.

If This Is Synthetic, I'll Take It!

The bass drum came with an Evans EMAD clear batter and an Evans pre-muffled Tempus logo head. It took me just five minutes to get an earthy, rumbling presence, with just enough attack.

A thin bass drum shell can be a mixed blessing. You get plenty of sub-low frequencies, but these are pretty much useless outside of the studio because they tend not to "travel." The Tempus bass drum, on the other hand, had a more balanced sonic palette than I expected, whether tuned high or low.

The EMAD batter worked well with the supplied foam ring. At one point, I removed the ring and dwelled on the openness of the drum. Then I tried an EQ1 coated batter. This produced a perfectly useable sound, with a little more "air" and a touch of pitch-bend.

I'm not fond of pre-muffled front bass drum heads. But the Evans model worked on this drum, affording the perfect degree of control over overtones without choking off the "bigness" of the drum. Even though the drum had no hole in the front head, you could place a mic 6" in front of it and you'd be in the ballpark for any club or recording.

The carbon fiber toms opened up with a throatiness that reminded me of wood, although they were arguably a little more articulate than wood drums at first hit. If anything, the toms were a little dry, perhaps analogous to birch vs. maple. I

touched them lightly and delighted in a sweet pitch, figuring that if I slapped the drums hard, I'd lose it. But that initial pitch simply got louder, without being changed or distorted. This characteristic helped me during a particularly loud rehearsal calling for heavy, direct tom fills. With some toms, I have to coax the sound out of the drums. With the Tempus toms, I merely gave them a good "pop" and the rest was taken care of. Nice.

The rack and floor toms blended well. The floor tom seemed capable of an enormous tuning range. Paul Mason's contention that carbon fiber shells "prefer" lower tensions seemed borne out. Mind you, there seemed to be no objection to me cranking the drumkey clockwise, either. The toms never lost their presence when tuned high, meaning that this kit could be played in a variety of genres from Latin to rock to jazz.

The toms also responded well to rimshots. Ever since I heard Jim Keltner on Ry Cooder's *Paradise And Lunch*, I've been introducing tom rimshots to the mix. They don't always come out at low tom tunings. They did on the Tempus toms.

$5^1/_2$x14 fiberglass snare

In The Realm Of The Snare

Tempus sent two 5x14 snare drums: one carbon fiber and one fiberglass. Both drums were hyper-sensitive, requiring virtually no fiddling to get them into orchestral territory for buzz rolls, ghost notes, or quiet strokes.

My test of a snare drum starts with the open tone. Can I get it to work as a high tom with snares off? With the Tempus drums, the answer was a resounding yes. Even with the snares on, the snare response doesn't disguise the fundamental note heard when the drum is played snares-off.

Rimshots worked extremely well in Steve Jordan (tight head) territory, while at looser tensions they were fat and full.

While the fiberglass drum proved somewhat livelier than the carbon fiber, I'd gladly take either drum, and, blindfolded, I'd be none the wiser for differences. I could roll, ghost, and hit rimshots all night on either drum and not get bored at the available range of nuances.

Paul Mason informs me that once you get accustomed to each shell, you can spot the acoustic differences immediately. All I can say for the moment is that both drums sounded as if they'd been lightly EQ'ed for a bump in the upper and lower frequencies.

Wrap It Up

With very few exceptions, wood has defined the drumshell trade for a century. Tempus begs that you reconsider that definition. I found Tempus drums plenty "woody"—as well as attractive, pleasant to play, durable, and functional. The price is just about right, too, when you consider that you'll be working directly with the company president, who makes each drum to order, by hand.

So when you visit Tempus's Web site and are greeted with the "un-natural" pop-up, take it with a grain of salt. In fact, forget that Tempus drums are synthetic. Hit 'em hard...cause a fright. Hit 'em soft...ahh, delight.

THE NUMBERS

CarbonFibre Drums

$5^1/_2$x14 snare	$815
8x12 rack tom	$629
14x14 rack tom	$955
16x20 bass drum (including rail mount)	$1,596
Complete kit package	$3,995

(This configuration is also available in fiberglass, at $3,590.)

$5^1/_2$x14 fiberglass snare	$735

(604) 904-5704, www.tempusdrums.com

SNARE DRUM OF THE MONTH by Michael Dawson

WORLDMAX 5x14 BLACK DAWG

HOW'S IT SOUND?

The Black Dawg is a crisp-sounding snare with a strong personality that would fit into almost any musical situation. When played dead center at a medium tuning, it lets out a meaty bark that's as perfectly suited for hard-hitting rock grooves as it is for mellow singer/songwriter sessions. At higher tensions, the drum's sensitivity kicks into overdrive, making it ideal for jazz and orchestral work (buzz rolls were exceptional, sizzling all the way to the edge), while rimshots let out a loud and punchy "crack" that would sound great on a high-energy Kenny Aronoff–inspired track. Then when you *really* crank it, you get popping hip-hop/R&B backbeats without choking the drum's full-bodied character.

The only thing I would change about the Black Dawg is the choice of hardware. While the vintage-style single-flanged rims and lug clips add an element of sophistication to its look, they can also get in the way of rimshots, especially if you like to switch between matched and traditional grip. If that's a concern, WorldMax also offers triple-flanged or die-cast hoops.

HOW'S IT WORK?

Standard **single-flanged hoops** produce strong rimclicks, but can also chew through sticks quickly.
S-3 Throw-off is easy to access, but can accidentally disengage when loosening snare tension on the fly.

WHAT'S IT COST?

5x14 black chrome-plated brass shell with S-3 strainer. . $578
www.worldmaxusa.com

To hear this drum, log on to www.moderndrummer.com.

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16" K Custom Dark Crash
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20" Oriental Crash of Doom
22" Swish Knocker

NIKKI GLASPIE CYMBAL SET UP
13" K Custom Special Dry HiHats
17" K Custom Hybrid Crash
10" K Custom Dark Splash
17" K Custom Crash
22" K Custom High Definition Ride
20" Oriental Crash of Doom

LP Raul Rekow Signature Series Congas And Bongos

Drums Of A Different Stripe

by Norman Arnold

KEY NOTES

- Authentic sounds
- Quality manufacturing
- Finish might not be for everyone

Raul Rekow has been an integral part of Carlos Santana's band since the 1970s. His playing can be heard on countless albums by Santana, as well as on recordings by a host of other hitmakers. It seems only fitting that the Latin Percussion drums that bear his name are as colorful as the performer himself.

Congas

The Raul Rekow congas are made with 3–ply premium wood shells that are wrapped with a tiger print finish with gold glitter embedded in the print. (Grrr!) It's a striking look, but it might be a bit much for some more conservative or traditional players.

The quinto, conga, and tumba measure 30" tall by 11", $11\frac{3}{4}$", and $12\frac{1}{2}$" respectively. Gold-colored Comfort Curve II rims and LP side plates give the drums a unique visual stamp. The drums are also fitted with LP's Pro Care Integrated Shell Protectors to prevent the lugs from scratching the surface of the shells when the drums are close together. A gold bottom cap on each drum protects the base and adds stability when the drum is played on the floor. The heads are hand-selected rawhide that LP chooses specifically for this series of drums.

When I played the quinto and conga, I was impressed by how authentic the drums sounded: deep and warm. The heads were matched really well, helping the drums to sound solid and resonant. The Comfort Curve rims are set low, so they don't come into play much. As advertised, they make the drums really comfortable to play.

I brought in the tumba—tuned pretty low—to round out the set. I normally play three drums, with the quinto in the middle, the tumba on the left, and the conga on the right. It was really easy to fall into a groove with the Rekow drums set up this way. All three are very versatile and sound great either on the floor or mounted. (I tried the quinto and conga off the floor in cradle stands, and they each had a great low tone.) The three drums blended together well, with similar tone and decay. Experimenting with different tunings demonstrated that the drums offer a range from a tight "pop" sound to a looser "old school" vibe.

The manufacturing quality on the Rekow congas is very high, and the drums are fitted with top-line LP hardware, rims, and lugs. This is a solid combination of great sound and high-quality workmanship.

Bongos

The Raul Rekow bongos are designed to match the congas—and they do. They feature 3-ply wood shells, and they have the same gold hardware as on the congas. They're also wrapped with the same tiger print finish. (A tiger cub, if you will.) The manufacturing quality is likewise very high. These are solidly made bongos that should stand up to many years of playing.

The heads are of selected rawhide and can easily be tuned to a crisp and biting register. The Comfort Curve II rims sit very low, making the bongos easy on the hands. When I played the drums while seated, they didn't dig into my legs, which made them comfortable to play in that position. When I mounted the bongos on a stand in front of the congas, I was rewarded with a bevy of sounds and surfaces to play on.

The Raul Rekow congas and bongos represent a complete series of matching drums and sounds that will deliver in just about any music setting. Like on your gig at the zoo...or on an African safari...or at Tiger Stadium.... Okay, I'll stop.

THE NUMBERS

11" quinto	$529
11¾" conga	$539
12½" tumba	$558
bongos	$299

(973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com

Quick Looks

Silver Fox Clawstix

Clawstix, from Grover Pro Percussion's Silver Fox drumstick division, are multi-rods with a difference. Where other manufacturers generally use one type of dowel material to create their rods, such as wood or plastic, Grover has combined thirteen blonde birch rods with six black Delrin rods. (Delrin is the material they use for their synthetic-tip sticks.) Grover feels that this combination produces a brighter sound than that created by wood dowels alone, but with a warmer quality than totally synthetic models. It also gives the rods a cool "striped" appearance.

Clawstix are 16" long, with a solid feeling at the handle. When I used them on a drumkit, they brought out a deep sound on drums, as well as a clear sound on cymbals, with lots of definition. A moveable O-ring fitted onto each shaft allows you to adjust the spread of the dowels, varying the sound from broad and thick to pointed and distinct. All in all, Clawstix are nifty new tools to include in one's stick bag. They list for $30 per pair.

(781) 935-6200, www.groverpro.com

Chap Ostrander

Alesis DM5 Electronic Drumkit

Entry-Level E-Drums

by Rick Long

If you have any experience with studio recording gear, you'll recognize the name Alesis. This company has been producing studio signal processors, synthesizers, and recording equipment for many years, and they have a reputation for great sound and solid reliability. Their line of drum modules is now in its fifth iteration, known as the DM5. Their new electronic drumkit is built around that module.

KEY NOTES

- DM5 sound module offers excellent flexibility
- Drum pads provide good playing response and accurate triggering
- Bass drum pad design prevents movement

Kit Configuration

The DM5 electronic drumkit can most realistically be viewed as an entry-level product for new drummers, or as an inexpensive way to add electronic percussion to a home studio. It's a small kit that includes five drum pads and two cymbal pads. Of the drum pads, one is intended to be used for hi-hat and another for bass drum. The two cymbal pads are divided between ride and crash duties.

All of the pads are single-zone. The drum pads have a raised rubber rim and a blocked-out second output jack, so perhaps upgraded dual-zone pads aren't far away. The pads offer good stick rebound, and the triggering is quite accurate. I experienced no false or missed triggering at any time during the review period.

The Sound Module

The heart of any electronic kit is the sound module. The DM5 includes 540 percussion samples recorded in true stereo at 48 kHz, with ambient effects. The samples are well recorded and clear. Dynamic articulation enables the DM5 module to vary the volume, tone, and pitch of the drum sounds according to the force with which the drum pad is played.

There are 21 pre-programmed drum/percussion kits, which can be overwritten with drumkits that you program. This erases the pre-programmed kit in that memory location, but factory-programmed kits can be recalled individually. You don't need to do a global reset to get back to the factory defaults.

The DM5 has enough input jacks for twelve triggers and one footswitch. Since the kit uses only seven of the trigger inputs, there is ample room for expansion. While the typical setup of this kit would be snare, toms 1 and 2, hi-hat, bass drum, crash, and ride, you can connect the triggers to different inputs in order to vary the kit. An easy variation is to use tom 2 & 3 inputs, giving the kit a heavier rock feel. Of course, you could also leave the inputs set as they are and change the programming of the module.

The reference manual contains a detailed section on how to set up triggers on an acoustic drumset, as well as how to tweak the module for use with acoustic triggers. No matter how you decide to go about using the DM5 kit and module, hours of fun experimentation await you.

MIDI Matters

For those of you familiar with MIDI gear, the DM5 allows you to store system data, so

you could choose to handle your drumset programming in that manner. A useful feature called "random sample" realistically varies the sound of the drum sample as it's played, in order to give MIDI tracks a more human feel. In addition to being mounted directly on the drumkit, the DM5 module can also be mounted along with other sound processing gear in a standard-sized equipment rack. Stereo main and auxiliary outputs along with MIDI In and MIDI Out jacks are on the back panel.

The MIDI connections are your key to expansion of the DM5 sound palette and overall functionality. The DM5 has an 18-bit sampling rate with 16-note polyphony. The module includes a polyphony overflow mode so that if you exceed 16 samples playing at once, the overflow notes are sent to the MIDI Out port. A second DM5 can be connected to handle those overflow sounds. In fact, you can add as many DM5 modules as you can afford. The polyphony increases by 16 notes with each additional module.

Physical Features

Out of the box, the drum rack is slightly confusing to set up. The small pictures printed in the instructional brochure included with the kit make the orientation of the rack clamps difficult to see. Still, the few mistakes that might be made during set-up will be easily corrected as you discover what works and what doesn't.

The pictures of the kit in the setup brochure show the DM5 module mounted above the top crossbar. Depending upon the height of the drummer, it could be difficult to place the mounted tom pad in a comfortable spot with the module in this position. Online photos of the kit show the module mounted underneath the top crossbar. This would allow more room for positioning the mounted tom exactly where you want it.

The rack attachments and clamps are tightened with an Allen wrench instead of a knob or wing nut. This would make set-up and teardown more difficult if the kit was to be transported often, but that isn't the intended use of this kit. The Allen wrench is included, but you'll need a Phillips screwdriver for mounting the DM5 module.

The rack is designed so that the arms extending from the main poles can be folded inward and the entire kit easily stored out of the way against a wall or in the back of a closet. The rack is light and compact enough that one person can easily move the kit around.

The hi-hat pedal tension is adjustable, but it works well right out of the box. The pedal itself is a bit light; it might benefit from having a base-plate of some kind to prevent slipping. Placing the kit on a carpet and using the hook side of a large section of hook & loop fastener to secure the pedal in place would also work well.

When it comes to bass drum pads on electronic kits, many suffer from two problems: First, they're often too light to stay in place when played. Second, they use a different pad design from the other pads in the kit. If a problem occurs, you can't substitute one of the other pads for the bass drum pad to get you through a gig or studio session.

Alesis mounts their bass drum pad on a rack bar that connects between two rack crossmembers. It isn't going anywhere. And they use the same pad design for the bass drum as for the snare and toms. A beginner-level single-spring bass drum pedal is included with the kit, but the pad is wide enough to accommodate a double pedal, using whatever size beater might be desired.

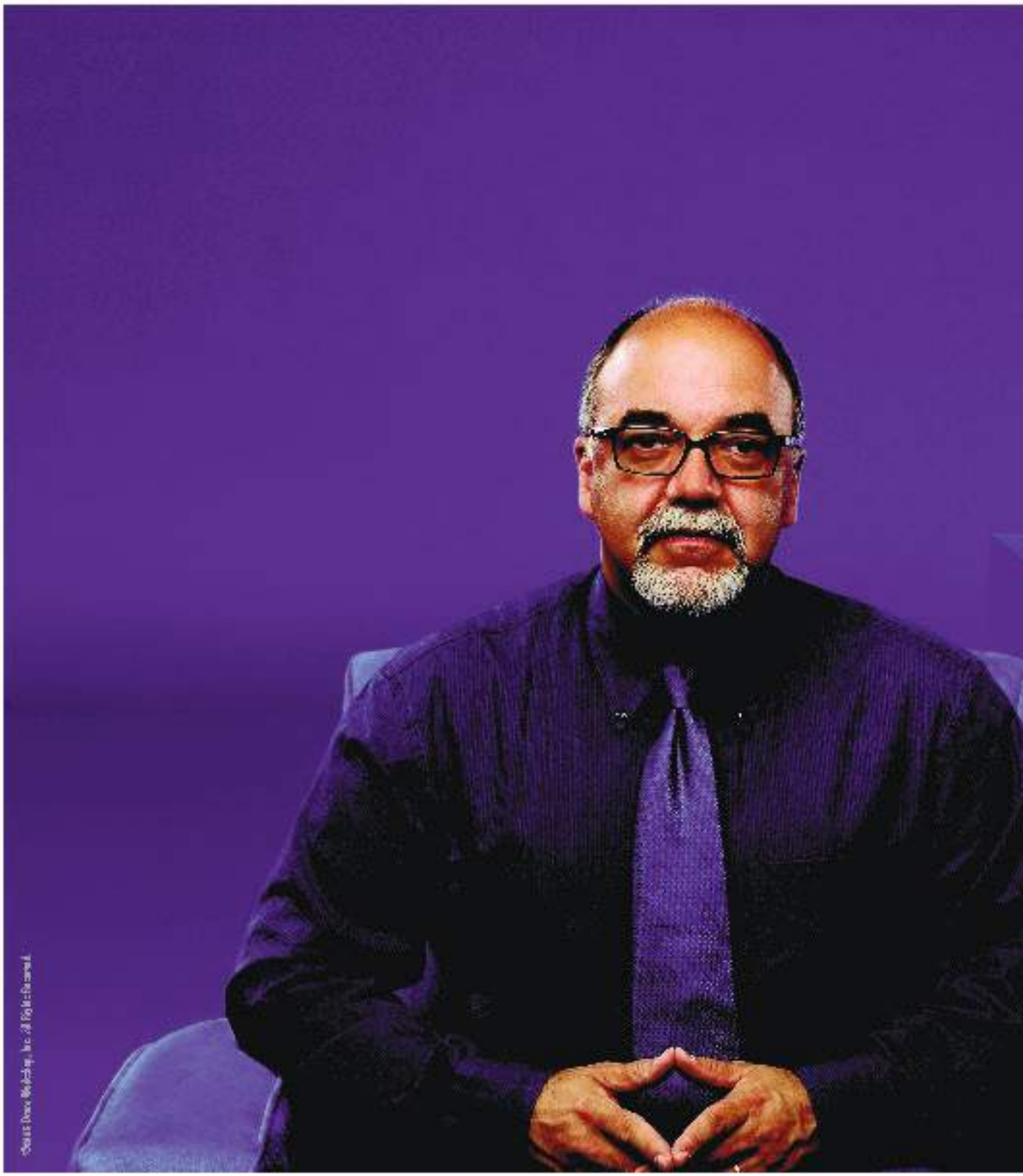
Handy Hints

For those new to electronic kits, Alesis has made the transition easy by including a Quick Reference Guide that will get you set up and playing in no time. The DM5 Sound Chart lists all available sounds on a two-sided sheet. This makes finding the sound you want easier than having to dial through the list on the module's screen. The Reference Manual is well written and easy to understand, so students and parents won't be confused when setting up or working with the kit.

All in all, the DM5 electronic kit is an excellent introduction to the world of electronic percussion. It's functional, flexible, and affordable. (The street price is liable to be considerably less than the manufacturer's suggested list price.) Not a bad way to get started!

THE NUMBERS

DM5 Electronic Drumkit $699
Price includes pads, rack, and sound module.
Additional DM5 modules can be purchased for $499.
(401) 658-5760, www.alesis.com



For decades, Peter has made his mark in the world of jazz drumming.
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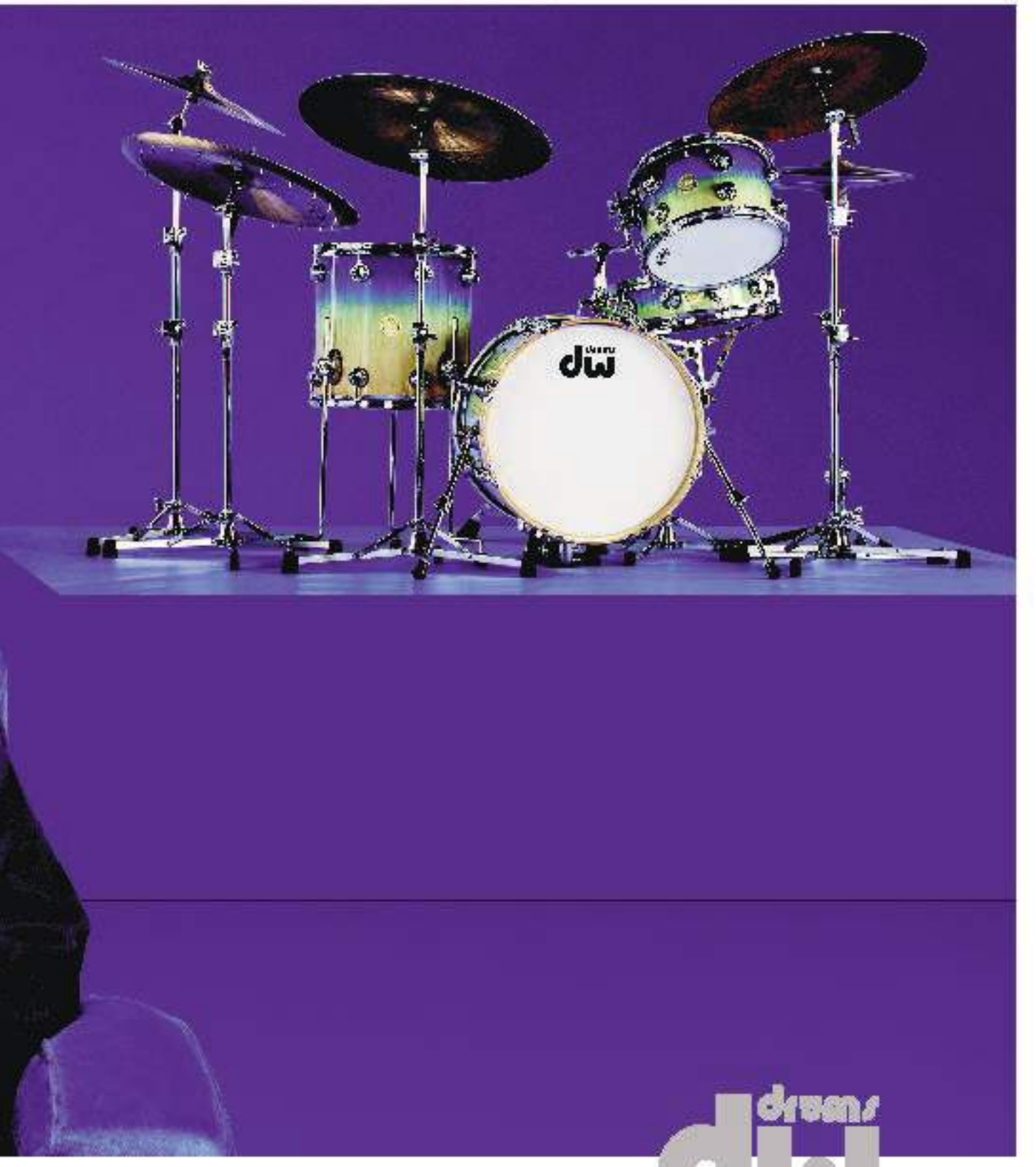

drums

DECADES

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Ford Drums now feature logo badges sporting the look of a fine automobile hood ornament, along with bass drum and tom lugs that give the kits a unique appearance. The boat tail–styled lug shape was inspired by Auburn cars of the 1930s.

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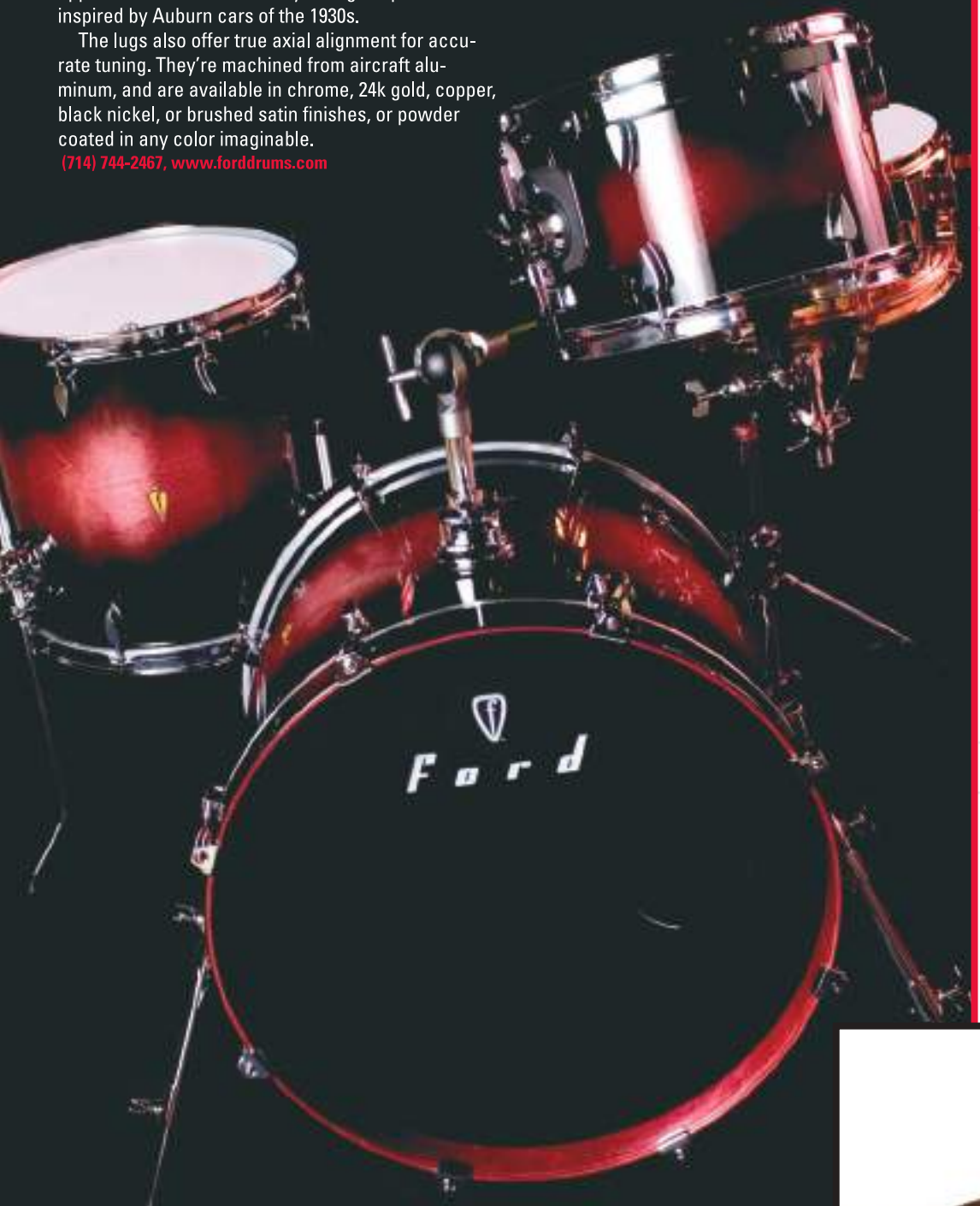

Ford has also created several custom snares for their endorsers, including one with 24k gold plating over a steel shell for Rascals drum legend Dino Danelli.

<< AQUARIAN SUPER-2 HEADS

Aquarian's Super-2 drumheads are designed to sound louder and fuller than conventional 2-ply models, with great attack, rich mid-range, and powerful low-end and depth. They feature Aquarian's high-tech molding process, which is said to produce a head that's level and even, with a consistent collar—making Super-2 heads easy to tune. Other features include Safe-T-Loc hoops and the Sound Curve collar design, which provides what Aquarian calls "responsive tuning." With this feature, one small turn of the drumkey causes the heads to react.

Heads are available in 6" through 18" sizes, in Clear, Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot versions. A free tuning sheet is enclosed with each head.

(800) 473-0231, www.aquariandrumheads.com

Super-2 heads are targeted at drummers seeking more tone, more power, and more projection for today' s music.

<< KORG PADKONTROL STUDIO CONTROLLER

Korg's padKONTROL studio controller offers a wide range of control possibilities for expressive MIDI performance on stage or in the studio. The sixteen velocity-sensitive trigger pads can be used to perform natural-sounding drum parts, to trigger audio loops or video clips, to serve as function or transport controls, or to send MIDI control change messages.

The padKONTROL comes with a dfh SUPERIOR drumkit plug-in. This 250 MB drumkit features 2,600 samples. Also included is Korg's "Creative Kontrol Pack Volume 2," which includes software applications from Ableton, I.K. Multimedia, UVI, Propellerhead, and Korg. The padKONTROL connects to a Mac or Windows computer, and can be used as a USB-to-MIDI interface for other external MIDI sound modules.

(631) 390-6500, www.korg.com

Old School heads are made with carbon-steel hoops for higher tension and greater volume than ordinary heads.

<< ATTACK JEFF OCHELTREE OLD SCHOOL DRUMHEADS

Attack Drumheads and renowned drum builder/technician Jeff Ocheltree have joined forces to create a line of heads specifically designed to produce the classic rock sound of the 1970s and '80s with state-of-the-art design and quality. Based on Jeff's experience as "drumtech to the stars" for more than forty years, Jeff Ocheltree Old School heads recall a time when music featured drums that were up front and powerful.

Because a drum's sound is affected equally by the top and bottom heads, Old School heads are sold in matched sets. The 1000-gauge tom heads come in clear/clear, clear/coated, and coated/coated sets. Bass drum heads come in sets of No Overtone twin-ply clear or coated batters and black front heads. Every bass drum pack comes with two thick 100% wool felt strips, along with Jeff Ocheltree's personal tuning instructions.
(800) 282-0110, www.attackdrumheads.com

<< PRO-MARK 50TH ANNIVERSARY SNARE DRUMS AND NEW AUTOGRAPH STICK MODELS

Pro-Mark is celebating their fiftieth anniversary in 2007. To mark the occasion, the company has teamed with drum craftsman Pete Stanbridge to create a limited number of snare drums built from the three types of wood used by Pro-Mark in the manufacture of their drumsticks.

The shell of each drum is Japanese Shira Kashi white oak. The company's signature "bands" are inlaid in walnut. The hoops are a combination of American maple and pau ferro (an exceptionally hard wood). The cast gold-plated 50th Anniversary badge is mounted on a small hickory frame. The drum is finished in a high-gloss instrument lacquer and fitted with 24k gold–plated hardware. Only fifty each in $5^1/_2$x14 and $6^1/_2$x14 sizes will be made. Drums may be reserved through Pro-Mark's Web site.

Pro-Mark's new TX721B Marco Minnemann model is made of American hickory, with a modified round wood tip. At 16" long and .590" (15 mm) in diameter, it's designed for drummers who need extra durability without sacrificing a lively rebound.

The SD330 Todd Sucherman model is made of American rock maple with a modified acorn-shaped wood tip. It's 16" long and .590" (15 mm) in diameter for drummers who prefer a large grip for comfort, but want a lighter stick for playability. List price for both models is $12.95 per pair.
(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com

<< PEACE PARADE SERIES MARCHING DRUMS

Parade series lacquered marching drums from Peace feature maple/mahogany/maple sandwich shells—a combination designed to maximize volume, tone, durability, and cost-effectiveness. Two snare drum models (11x13 and 12x14) and six 14"-deep bass drum sizes (18" to 28" in diameter, in 2" increments) are available, in finishes that include translucent and solid lacquers as well as fades and bursts. School colors can easily be matched.

(626) 581-4510, www.peacedrums.com

<< AND WHAT'S MORE >>

With simple-to-use functions and a slim body, **YAMAHA**'s ME-150BK electronic metronome is as easy to operate as a cell phone. The unit features an LCD screen that displays the beat and waveform image. It also comes with memory function and an automatic power off.

The ME-150BK offers users a wide tempo range, making it excellent for practicing and learning new pieces. The unit exhibits long battery life to meet the needs of lengthy performances or intense rehearsals. Suggested list price is $49.95.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamaha.com/band

MIGHTY GRIP is a powdered product designed to improve drumstick grip. The powder is intended to be applied on the outside of the first finger, between the first and third knuckle, then under the thumb knuckle and about an inch on either side of the thumb knuckle. The drummer then rubs the thumb against the first finger before picking up a stick, activating the gripping properties. One application will last for over an hour. A $^1/_4$-oz. bottle provides up to 150 applications.

(866) 517-7810, www.mightygrip.com

<< The Reference Shelf >>

Grooves For Drums & Bass

(Book/CD)
by Cristiano Micalizzi
(BMG/Hal Leonard)

This book/CD package contains a large collection of popular rhythms in a wide variety of musical styles. Each rhythm is presented in different versions showing drum and bass patterns together. Recorded examples are mixed with drums on the left channel and bass on the right so that either can be isolated. Author/drummer Micalizzi is a highly regarded performer, clinician, and educator in Italy. The bass tracks are performed by top Italian studio bassist Francesco Puglisi. List price is $19.95.

www.musicdispatch.com

Visual Drumming: The Art Of Stage Presence And Showmanship (DVD)

by Steven O'Reilly (Knightyme Studios)

This DVD is for the drummer who wishes to learn the art of showmanship. Steven O'Reilly demonstrates elements of stage presence, stick tricks, and other methods to make a drummer's performance as entertaining as it is musical. List price is $20.

www.myspace.com/visualdrumming

Bass Drum Secrets (DVD)

by Jared Falk (Railroad Media)

This DVD from rising Canadian drummer Jared Falk offers a training program for drummers who wish to improve their bass drum speed, power, and control. It includes advanced tips and tricks, detailed instructions, slow-motion video, and exclusive practice materials designed to assist drummers of all skill levels. This special package also includes bonus footage from the original *Bass Drum Secrets* video by Rick Kettner. List price is $39.95.

www.railroadmedia.com

Moeller Method Secrets (DVD)

by Mike Michalkow (Railroad Media)

Canadian drummer/educator Mike Michalkow heads the drum department in the US for the National Guitar Workshop, and appeared at the Vancouver International Drum Festival every year from 2001 through 2005. In this instructional double DVD package, Mike covers all aspects of the Moeller Method, along with other topics of interest including finger control, stick grip, and efficient motion. One disc is dedicated to instruction, the other to inspirational demonstration in a band format. List price is $59.99.

www.railroadmedia.com

JUST A LITTLE BIT ABOUT VATER PERCUSSION USA

Vater History

In the 1940's, Alan and Ron Vater's grandfather, Jack Adams, opened Jack's Drum Shop in Boston. In 1956 Alan and Ron's Godfather began hand-turning drumsticks at the rate of six pairs a day for Jack's Drum Shop. The reputation of these hand crafted drumsticks spread among the area's top drummers, and soon famous drummers like Philly Joe Jones and Buddy Rich were seeking out these special sticks.

In the 1970's Clarry Vater, Jack's son-in-law and Vater Percussion's founder, took over the family tradition with the help of his two young sons, Alan and Ron. Their goal was to perfect the art of stick making with modern machinery and maintain the high quality that made Jack's sticks famous.

In the 1980's Vater moved operations to a larger facility in Holbrook, MA. Vater's private label customer base then expanded from local drum shops to designing and manufacturing sticks for major companies such as Vic Firth and Zildjian. During this intense growth, Vater perfected the design of their equipment and developed a unique formula for finishing their sticks, while keeping strict quality control their number one priority.

In 1990 Vater launched its own line of "Vater Brand" products, began marketing and gained major distribution. Immediately, drummers who tried Vater were hooked. As word spread about Vater's unmatched quality, the world's largest names in drumming began making Vater their stick of choice by endorsing the product. From that time to the present, Vater continues to improve their manufacturing equipment, computer analyzed pitch & weight pairing systems, and is always increasing production.

Now 50 years later, the Vater Family expands on the family tradition by offering the finest drumsticks, timpani, marimba and vibe mallets, brushes, specialty sticks and accessories in the world. Quality, craftsmanship, pride, and hands-on production... started by Jack, perfected by Clarry, and carried into the new millennium by Alan and Ron Vater and a team of dedicated craftsmen. Now, as always... Quality is everything.

Jack Adams

Jack's Drum Shop (circa 1950's)

Joan & Clarry Vater

Ron & Alan Vater w/ Chad Smith

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**IT'S NO SECRET THAT GREAT DRUMMING BEGINS WITH USING THE BEST STICKS.
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KIM THOMPSON
BEYONCE

PHAT RIDE
Quick taper to a medium-sized round tip produces a clean sound on ride cymbals. Very versatile and playable stick with great balance.

L 16" D .580"

NIKKI GLASPIE
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8A
Small barrel-shaped tip for defined cymbal articulation. Very responsive.

L 16" D .555"

FRED ELTRINGHAM
DIXIE CHICKS
THE WALLFLOWERS

POWERHOUSE
Designed in collaboration with Virgil Donati. Large acorn tip and heavy shoulder provides big sound volume.

L 16 1/4" D .620"

ROCKY GRAY
EVANESCENCE

XD-5A NYLON
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L 16 1/2" D .580"

JOHN BLACKWELL
JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

JOHN BLACKWELL'S JIA ANGEL
The extra length and gradual taper makes Blackwell's design incredibly responsive and balanced. The small barrel shaped tip gives great cymbal clarity.

L 16 1/8" D .570"

CODY HANSON
HINDER

1A WOOD
A lengthy stick with a 5B style grip and acorn tip.

L 17" D .590"

VATER PERCUSSION USA

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Kim Thompson

Fueling Beyoncé's Formidable All-Female Band

Look out, world. The potent drumming tandem of Kim Thompson and Nikki Glaspie is steamrolling cross-country on the road with Beyoncé's all-female band. As twenty-two-year-old Nikki says, "Our plan has been to hit the stage and *rip*." Indeed, this striking twosome has been turning heads and leaving jaws hanging as they've forged their unlikely alliance on the bandstand during the *B-Day* tour.

Given their considerable drumming prowess exhibited on previous gigs—Kim the jazzer with veteran pianist Kenny Barron, trumpeter Wallace Roney, and guitarist Mike Stern; Nikki the funk-rocker with Dave Fiuczynski's experimental Kif, Sam Kinninger's slamming jam band, and a provocative trio featuring Roots singer Martin Luther—expectations are high for these two young

Story by Bill Milkowski

ladies. And Beyoncé has already proclaimed their chemistry "magical."

As the pop superstar put it when she announced her nationwide talent search for musicians to fill her all-female band: "I'm all about female empowerment. I'm all about pushing the envelope. I want to get together a group of fierce, talented, hungry, beautiful women for my band." And she got her wish with Kim and Nikki.

Thompson and Glaspie were among the hundreds of talented drummers who participated in auditions this past June in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Atlanta. Thirty finalists were flown to New York, where they played for Beyoncé and her manager/father, singer Matthew Knowles, at Sony Music Studios in Midtown Manhattan. And when it came down to a final choice between the slamming Glaspie and the sizzling Thompson, they decided to take both drummers out on tour. As Beyoncé's father put it, "It's like having Kobe *and* Shack. Why take one or the other when you can have both?"

This dynamic drumming twosome now fuels Beyoncé's kicking ten-piece all-female touring band, which also includes guitarist Bibi McGill, bassist Divinity Walker, keyboardists Britanni and Rie, alto saxophonist Tia Fuller, tenor saxophonist Kathy Rodriguez, trumpeter Kiku Collins, and percussionist Marcie Chapa.

Modern Drummer caught up with the two young drummers during a period of intensive eleven-hour rehearsals at S.I.R. studios in New York, where they forged their unique chemistry in preparation for Beyoncé's *B-Day* tour.

Photos By Rob Shanahan

Kim Thompson

A Jazz Mindset

At the 55 Bar, where former Miles Davis sideman Mike Stern holds forth every Monday and Wednesday night at the intimate Greenwich Village nightclub affectionately known by musicians and clientele as "The Dump," drummer Kim Thompson is dealing in typically scintillating fashion. A gifted player and protégé of Ben Riley, the jazz drumming legend who played with Thelonious Monk during the '60s, she exercises an incredible range of tones and dynamics on the kit, often within the same song. On Stern's routine set opener, the jazz standard "There Is No Greater Love," Thompson begins by cooking on a low flame, swinging briskly with brushes before gradually building the intensity level, until the guitarist kicks on his distortion pedal and heads to the stratosphere on one of his patented crescendos of nasty distortion-laced chops of doom.

At that point, Kim is a whirlwind of kinetic energy on the kit, wailing with the ferocious intensity of full-throttle Tony Williams. In this all-out burn mode she generates a polyrhythmic pulse that pushes Stern's pyrotechnic tendencies to another level. The same scenario happens on the guitarist's regular set closer, a blistering uptempo rendition of Monk's "Straight No Chaser." Again starting off with brushes, Kim swings lightly and politely behind Mike's subdued opening statements on his trusty Telecaster. And by the climax, as Stern stomps on his distortion box once again and heads to

Hendrixland, she is right with him, slamming her kit with muscular authority.

It's all in a day's work for the twenty-five-year-old drummer who has been making a name for herself on the New York scene in recent years with a host of other jazz notables, including trumpeter Wallace Roney, bebop singer Mark Murphy, and the elegant, swinging pianist Kenny Barron.

As Stern says, "Kim's really special. She has so much great stuff that she plays from the heart. She can funk her ass off, she can lay down a mean blues shuffle, and she has a great swing conception for straight-ahead. She's got some Tony [Williams] in her, and she's also got some of that Idris Muhammad New Orleans thing going on. And she can play straight rock 'n' roll, Hendrix-type grooves. It's always fun playing with her, because she brings excitement to the bandstand every time she hits."

In fact, Stern is so impressed by the young drummer, who followed Dennis Chambers in the guitarist's working quartet, that he named one of the tracks on his new album for her ("KT" on *Who Let The Cats Out*). "I'm really proud to have featured her in my touring band and on this new record, because I think she's gonna be one of the greats," says Stern.

Now, with a high-profile gig like Beyoncé, Kim Thompson's talents are becoming known to the masses.

MD: You and Nikki come from very different worlds, musically. She's got this very slamming, very precise style of playing, almost a drum 'n' bass kind of thing, but also with a deep funk pocket. How has it been going in terms of developing a chemistry with her?

Kim: It's going well. I'm learning a lot. Nikki has so much to offer as a musician and as a player. She comes from a whole other background, and it's really a miraculous and empowering thing to bring together these two strong forces. She's really strong in her bag, and I'm really strong in mine. So we're blending these two things together, and it's a lot of fun. It's a lot of hard work, too, but overall it's a sensational experience that's going to shape our careers down the line.

I'm excited to be working with Nikki. I feel like she's my little sister. She's a lot of fun and a good person. And it's funny because both Nikki and I played in drumlines for a long time when we were young. And this situation is very similar in terms of that kind of linear precision playing, where everybody has a specific part that coincides with the other parts, which complements the music that's happening in the rest of the band and brings it all together.

Nikki and I have worked out parts. We've been playing a lot of unison stuff. But we've also been splitting things up. "Okay, you take that fill, I'll take this one." And vice versa. So we're just complementing each other.

MD: This has got to be a very different situation for you, coming from your deep jazz background, to suddenly being in this pop setting. How have you had to adjust for this gig?

Kim: First of all, the snare drum has to be tuned to a certain pitch for this band, to where it almost sounds like a shotgun. There's no resonance there, it's very staccato. And the toms have to be tuned in a way where they don't sing enough for me, but that's the way they have to be for a gig

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"It's very important to me to maintain my connection to jazz. I'm never gonna leave it—never."

Nikki Glaspie
Funk-Fusion Firebrand

It was guitar marvel Dave Fiuczynski who first alerted me to the talented young drummer Nikki Glaspie. The Screaming Headless Torsos leader made a special point of getting me to attend a gig at Makor in New York City showcasing his audacious power trio, Kif, an outlet for Fuze's fretless guitar work and love of Middle Eastern scales played on top of thick pocket grooves and hyper-kinetic drum 'n' bass rhythms. Fuze's pitch to me was simple: "This kid is positively killing! You will not believe her." And, of course, he was right.

Nikki's combination of blazing speed, Dennis Chambers–like power (no wonder she's called "Little Dennis" by so many drummers), and remarkable agility on the kit instantly marked her as a talent deserving wider recognition. Her sheer enthusiasm was infectious, her potential unlimited. I knew that night it would only be a matter of time before she'd break out and showcase her considerable drumming prowess on a much wider scale. And now, maybe a year or so after that introductory gig, it's happening with Beyoncé.

"The reason I used Nikki is because she has a phat pocket and makes everything feel great," says Fuze in retrospect. "She only plays what is essential, and there's never any shlock. She also has a handle on new and current beats and is a real joy to play with." Kim Thompson has echoed that sentiment about the slamming twenty-two-year-old Glaspie.

MD: Your playing in Kif was a beautiful balance of power, finesse, and focused intensity. I'm sure you're playing a whole different thing on this Beyoncé gig.

Nikki: Oh, yeah, it's *totally* different. I consider myself to be a stylistic drummer. Whatever gig I'm playing at the time, I try to step into that style, bringing my own approach to it. This gig with Beyoncé is cool and exciting, but it's like nothing I've ever done before.

MD: How would you describe what you were playing with Fuze?

Nikki: He likes fat grooves, and he plays Middle Eastern quarter-tone scales on top of that. Also, we play hip-hop, we play drum 'n' bass, and we rock out. We even do some dancehall. And we do a lot of odd-metered stuff. So the music goes in a whole lot of different directions throughout the set. He helped me develop a couple of things, specifically jazz-hop, which is something I'd never heard of before.

MD: What does that entail?

Nikki: It's a swing thing. You're swinging with your ride as hard as you can, and then you have backbeat on top of it. Fuze definitely helped me conceptually with that. And it's about listening and trying to create a picture.

MD: How did you hook up with Fuze?

Nikki: I met him at the Berklee College Of Music, where I was a student. I took a class with him and at some point we played in class. Afterwards he was like, "Yo, you wanna hook up later and play some stuff?" I was like, "I'd *love* to!" He's such a great guitar player and an awesome teacher. I learned so much from him. But he asked me to join his band because he likes my pocket. He definitely saw things that could be improved in my playing, and he helped me.

There was another important teacher at Berklee who changed my life, Angelamia Bachemin. She is one of the strongest people I know. She taught me about being a musician in the real world, and she gave me life lessons, which is more important than any drum lesson I ever took. She taught me how to lead a band and be an all-around great musician and person. She was caught in Hurricane Katrina. She ended up swimming around, saving nine people's lives, and she's rebuilding her house as we speak. She is a real hero to me.

MD: What were your playing situations during your years in Boston at Berklee?

Nikki: There was a club in Boston called Wally's, which was like the breeding ground for a lot of young cats at Berklee. I went down there during my freshman year to check it out, and it was amazing. Charles Haynes was playing drums, Mark Kelly was playing bass—the whole band was sick, so I got interested in playing that type of music. They were playing more funk

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"A lot of what I do has to do with my ears and what I can hear. If I can sing it, I can play it."

like this. I'm used to hearing some kind of tonality coming through the drums, so that has been a little bit challenging for me.

I'm in the process of getting new cymbals, because the jazz models I prefer don't work on a gig like this. The Zildjian K Constantinople crashes aren't really appropriate. You need gear that can really cut through this music, because it doesn't call for a lot of overtones. Everything has to be very linear and staccato. So the instrument itself doesn't get a chance to sing on its own. And that's something I'm not used to. I'm used to being very rhythmic and having many tones, having the drums *sing*, right in the moment on equal footing with the rest of the instruments in the band. But in pop music, the drums have a very specific role.

It's a transition period for me. I'm still piecing things together as far as what can happen and what can't happen on this gig. I'm making all these adjustments now. For instance, I'm sitting higher on the drumset than I usually do with Kenny, Wallace, or Mike, where I'm just very loose and flowing with the music. I can't be loose on this gig, because everything is so staccato.

MD: Have you ever played in situations with another drummer before?

Kim: Not to this extreme. I used to play with some rock and hip-hop bands that had two drummers, but it was looser, more on an underground tip where everything was raw and expressive. This is different. Like I said, this situation is very linear and orchestrated. I'm sure as time goes by we'll find more opportunities to swing out and be loose. But for me right now, coming from playing with Wallace Roney, Mike Stern, and Kenny Barron, where the music takes a shape of its own in the moment and there's an element of surprise—well, it's not that at all.

MD: Mike Stern's new record really showcases a lot of your diversity as a player, from swinging and burning to very alluring brushwork and slamming backbeats.

Kim: I love that record, and I love playing with Mike. He's awesome. He's a very dynamic player himself, he's got his own thing, and he's very particular about some things yet very open about others. I think when we play together there's this synergy that comes about that's maybe from the times he experienced playing with Miles, that excitement of being on the edge and rockin' out. We can cover all the bases in that band—the rock stuff, the jazz stuff, the contemporary stuff, the ballads. He's one of my favorite people to play ballads with. Mike can bring a tear to a glass eye, as Kenny Barron would say.

MD: How did you get the gig with Kenny Barron?

Kim: My first gig with Kenny happened out of a bad situation that turned out to be a good situation overall. One of my huge men-

Marcie Chapa

Adding Rhythmic Spice To Beyoncé's Band

Houston-based Marcie Chapa originally studied the drumset before switching to Latin percussion. "I was a jazz drummer and went to The New School in New York on a jazz scholarship when I was eighteen," she reports. "I studied there with Lewis Nash, and I also did some stuff with Chico Hamilton and Michael Carvin. But I never really studied hand percussion or timbales, not until I got back to Houston and I met a bunch of cats who had just defected from Cuba."

Rick Malkin

Apparently these percussionists spoke very little English, but they studied music in Havana and taught Chapa everything they knew. "They introduced me to a lot of Cuban bands, like Los Van Van, Irakere, and Los Muñequitos," she says. "And, of course, I was already into Giovanni Hidalgo and Tito Puente early on when I started getting into congas and timbales, so I was studying them on my own. And for some reason, playing Latin percussion just came very naturally to me. It wasn't as hard as the drumset. I picked it up easily and started doing salsa gigs right away around Houston."

Eventually Chapa branched out and began playing Latin percussion on R&B, pop, and Gospel gigs around her hometown. "And that's what I've been doing ever since," she says, "which is probably why this gig with Beyoncé hasn't been as difficult for me, because I've been around the pop scene a while, unlike Kim and Nikki. I've been playing in a lot of bands that play pop cover tunes. So I've already established an ear for what percussion should be doing in a pop setting, and I've been around a lot of musicians that have helped me out with that."

Chapa's onstage setup with Beyoncé includes Meinl bongos and congas, along with assorted percussion instruments, including wind chimes, bell tree, shakers, and tambourine. As for her role in the band, Marcie says, "I just fill in holes and throw in flavor rather than trying to show off all of my skills. Percussion is not about that; it's pretty much about playing the part, especially on a pop gig. On a salsa gig you're more like a drumset player. You're playing ostinato patterns the whole time and doing the fills. In pop, you're making all the hits with the band, hitting all the accents. It's more plotted out, more choreographed. You have to play your part, vibe off the drummers, and try to complement what they're doing."

"We want to be known as a killer band and have guys bow down to us."

Marcie confides that she has another personal goal in mind for the Beyoncé tour. "We want to show everybody that we're not just a bunch of girls," she laughs. "We want to be known as a killer band and have guys bow down to us. That's what we want…that's *exactly* what we want."

Bill Milkowski

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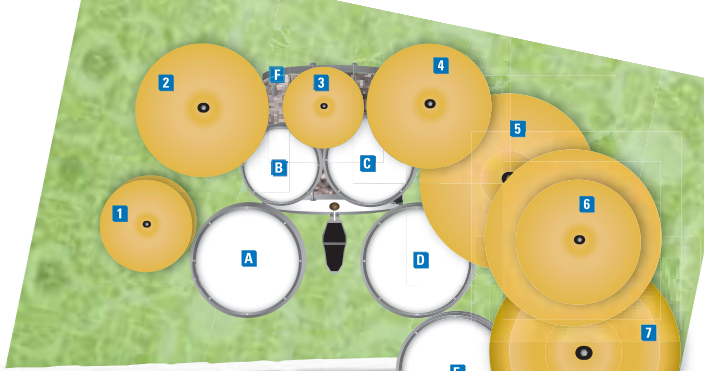
Kim Thompson



Kim's Kit

Drums: Yamaha 1500 Absolute Custom Nouveau in Apple Sparkle/maple finish

A. 6x14 maple snare (with wood hoops)
B. 8x10 tom
C. 9x12 tom
D. 14x14 floor tom
E. 15x15 floor tom
F. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 12" Mastersound hi-hats
2. 17" K Custom Hybrid crash
3. 10" K Custom Dark splash
4. 16" K Custom Dark crash
5. 22" K Custom Left Side ride
6. 16" ZHT on top of a 20" Oriental Crash Of Doom
7. 22" Swish Knocker

Hardware: Yamaha, including an FP9310 bass drum pedal

Heads: Evans coated G2 on snare batter, coated G2s on tops of toms with clear G2s underneath, coated EMAD on bass drum batter with Yamaha logo on front

Sticks: Vater Session, Phat Ride, and Studio models

tors and someone who is like a father to me is Ben Riley. I absolutely love his playing, and I love him so much. He's been in my life since I was about thirteen. I met him when he came to St. Louis about twelve years ago and played with Kenny at a club called The Bistro. One of the jazz enthusiasts there in St. Louis introduced me to him, and we got to talking. We always stayed in touch. When I got into college, I kept in touch with both Ben and Kenny.

Ben ended up having an episode healthwise where he had to be hospitalized and couldn't go to Cuba with Kenny to do the Havana Jazz Festival in 2000. I was a sophomore in college at the time, and Kenny had just performed a solo concert at my school, the Manhattan School Of Music. I caught up with him after the show and said, "Oh, Kenny, you sounded so beautiful. Thank you so much." And he was like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Do you have a passport?" I was like, "Huh? What do you mean?" And he said, "I need a drummer for Cuba, and you've been highly recommended." So that was my first gig with him, in Havana.

When I finally got there, it was amazing, but I was so nervous that I didn't think he would ever call me again to do a gig. Plus, I thought Ben had the gig and that I was only subbing temporarily. But Kenny created a whole new band, and fortunately I was a part of it.

I love Kenny's playing. He's one of my favorite piano players. His playing is timeless. There's a record with Kenny and Ben Riley that was just released in Japan called *Johnny Griffin & The Cary Dancers*, which they did back in the '60s. I just love it. They're so centered and at ease that they can get into any situation and everybody just kind of lands on their feet.

MD: So he took you down to Cuba without having heard you play before?

Kim: No, we hadn't even played. He took me strictly on Ben's recommendation. I cherish the time I've spent playing with Kenny. I've had a great career so far, and I'm never gonna leave jazz—never. It's very important to me to maintain my connection to jazz. In fact, I'm looking to do gigs whenever we have a break with Beyoncé's band. I'm on the phone with Mike and Wallace all the time, just trying to see when I can play with those guys again.

MD: So you have this great jazz pedigree, but what in your experience prepared you for playing on the high end of the dynamic scale—hitting hard, slamming, grooving in the pocket—either with Mike Stern or Beyoncé?

Kim: Before playing with Mike I had been playing with [vibraphonist and Blue Note recording artist] Stefon Harris a little bit. His stuff is like jazz with some contemporary and hip-hop elements. It's very groove-oriented. And I got a chance to hook up with one of my favorite bass players in his band, Taurus Mateen. He's a friend of mine, and he's my favorite bass player because he plays his instrument as if it's all instruments. And that's how I feel about the drums. You just play music, you don't lock yourself into a stylistic box or anything like that. It's about listening, feeling, and reacting in the moment.

Taurus and I started to play together a lot with this hip-hop band, and we would write stuff together and rock out. So he was definitely a big inspiration for the direction I took with the music and where I am now.

MD: As a teenager, were you into rock, funk, and other kinds of music?

Kim: Absolutely. As a kid I ran with the popular crowd, but within that group I was the quiet person. And I had friends of all cultures and races and would just allow myself to be open to anything musically that they were checking out. I had a long period where I listened to a lot of rock music and a

period where I listened to a lot of classical music. I even had a period where I listened to a lot of country music, from middle school to maybe my junior year in high school. I was really into a lot of different music, and my classes would run like that on a daily basis. I'd be in orchestra in the morning, I'd be in marching band midday, and the later part of the day I'd be in jazz band. And then I'd have basketball practice at night. So I was involved in a lot of stuff, and my mom was very open to letting me find what I wanted to do. I'm thankful for that support, because a lot of kids don't have that at such a young age.

My mom never told me I couldn't listen to this or that kind of music. In fact, she was doing a thesis at Washington University, some study on The Beatles, so I had all of their stuff available to me and I was crazy about their music. I'd go to band camp during the summertime at Columbia University and do a whole bunch of orchestra and drum line stuff, then just veg out on Beatles nonstop because I loved their music so much.

I'm able to internalize music and experience it on a very personal level, and I think that's what helps me go from A to B to C, switching up from playing rock to jazz to classical to hip-hop or anything else. I have a true love for all music.

MD: Was drums your first instrument?

Kim: The first instrument I picked up was guitar, and I used to sing a lot when I was a young girl. I was in all the choirs in middle school and high school.

MD: This was in St. Louis?

Kim: Yeah, I was born in Los Angeles and we lived there until I was about five. I was doing some Kellogg cereal commercials out there for a while and then we moved down south to Georgia. I spent the next four years down there in Valdosta and Waycross, because we have family down there. Then we moved to St. Louis, because that's where our immediate family is. And that's where I grew up, pretty much, and where I got into the drums. Then I moved to New York in 1999, got my degree, and here we are.

MD: What in particular attracted you to the drums?

Kim: I don't think there was anything in particular. At first my neighbor used to play a lot on his front porch. I would just be outside running around with my friends and one day I asked him, "What is that? What are you doing?" He was practicing a drum cadence on his snare drum, so I asked to him, "Can you teach me?" And so he taught me the bass drum line, and every day after that we were out there practicing, because it was so much fun. He took me to one of the first rehearsals I ever attended for the Kirkwood marching band. I think I was nine at the time, and I was the only female there.

I was so scared, and my adrenaline was pumping so hard—all of these boys with big drums and stuff. And if you messed up, you had to do twenty-five push-ups. I didn't find that appealing. Eventually I told my mother, "I don't wanna do this anymore. It's not fun." And so she thought my interest in drumming was over. But then she'd come home from work and there'd be pots, pans, and dishes spread out all over the floor and I'd be banging away on them. That went on for a while. Then when I was thirteen, I came home from school one day and there was my first drumset in the living room.

MD: Did you begin studying with anyone?

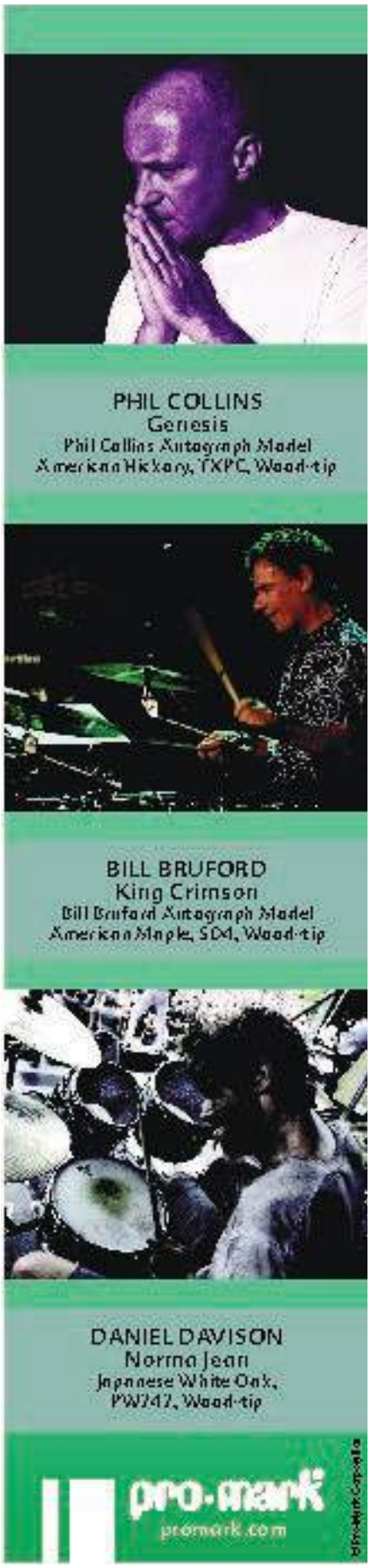
Kim: I studied with Rob Silverman in St. Louis. I also took a couple of lessons with this guy named Kevin Gionnina. Rob was my main teacher. He was more of a fusion drummer. He helped me a lot with rudiments and was a big influence on me. Kevin taught me more about jazz.

Later on I started going to the jazz clubs around St. Louis and hanging out with local musicians like Willy Aikens, Johnny O'Neal, Keon Harrell, and Pital Williams. All those guys are still playing in the jazz clubs in St. Louis. And that's remarkable because they're helping give birth to a new generation of musicians there. All of us that are here in New York now, each and every one of us, will tell you, "Yeah, I used to play with Pital Williams and Willie Aikens at Spools." Those guys are really important.

Anybody playing in certain cities that are really holding it down and just doing music that inspires a group of people, I don't think they know how important their role is. They're giving birth to a lot of really great people. And that's really nice. I'm getting teary-eyed just thinking about it.

MD: When you started playing jazz, did the time feel come easily for you, or was that something you had to work at?

Kim: The feelings were natural. The technical aspect was a little challenging. You have to work on that, of course. You have to do your homework and study the greats, like Philly Joe Jones and Elvin Jones, and figure



those things out. But the feeling, passion, and drive for it was always there.

MD: How did moving to New York affect your playing?

Kim: I thought I was a good jazz player when I was living in St. Louis. But after I got to New York I got my ass kicked. I had to practice because I was coming from a very linear place. I'm still working on it and just trying to develop my own sound. But no, it wasn't easy when I first got to New York, because there was a whole bunch of other people here that either played like me or extremely better than me. It was almost a disaster, but it worked out. It takes a whole lot of maturity, a lot of time alone, and a lot of practice before you get your confidence together. And like I said, I'm still working at it. I hope to never stop working and developing as a player.

MD: What did knowing Ben Riley do for you in terms of your philosophy about playing, your approach to the kit, and your understanding of jazz?

Kim: From listening to Ben I learned about life, how to convey life through music. He's a deep cat. His cymbal beat alone is amazing. He never hits 1. So his drum patterns are constantly evolving, just like life is always evolving. His whole approach to drumming is not about counting or putting things into units or boxes. It's always flowing.

Ben is also one of the most amazing brush players I've ever heard, and that inspired me a lot because many players of my generation don't really get into brushes anymore. I don't ever hear them, actually, and that's pretty sad. There's an abundance of things that Ben has taught me. I can't say enough about him.

MD: Did you formally study with him?

Kim: We never went through things on the kit. It was just about spending time together, listening to music, and talking about life, sharing experiences and whatnot. Ben and Lewis Nash, actually, have been good for me in that regard. I spent a lot of time with them when I first came to town.

If you're coming from a place like St. Louis, where you're known by everybody, when you get to New York you feel completely alone and isolated. That was a huge culture shock. Plus, if you're the only female playing drums in the entire history of your conservatory, and they're not used to accepting women in that mental state…well…it can be very depressing. It was kind of intimidating and a huge transition for me.

I went through a lot in college, and both Lewis and Ben really helped me keep my feet on the ground during my early days in New York. I'm really thankful to them. I learned so much from them. And the things that they said still work for me today. I'll never forget that, ever.

MD: Did you draw inspiration from any previous female drummers who were already on the scene?

Kim: Yeah, absolutely. I started developing a relationship with Terri Lyne Carrington five years ago. She took me under her wing and has been so supportive. She's like a big sister to me. I tried to make sure I respect her, always hold it down for her, and make her proud. I wouldn't have a career if it wasn't for her. She's paved the road for all of us females, so we're all very grateful to her.

MD: Thinking about your playing now, where you're at technically and spiritually with the music, how would you assess how you've grown since arriving in town?

Kim: I think I've matured quite a bit. I used

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to be a little bit crazy—I guess I still am.

MD: Well, you're a drummer. That's part of the job description.

Kim: [laughs] Yeah, but I've matured quite a bit and I have a lot more knowledge about what I'm doing these days than when I first moved here. I can see the difference between what's happening in the business and what's happening spiritually. I'm more aware of people's intentions, and I'm just smarter, I think, these days.

As far as playing, I always had big ears—and I hope I won't lose my hearing after this year. [laughs] I hear everything. It would annoy a lot of people how much I can hear. When I first moved here I didn't know quite what to do with it or even allow patience for it to develop. Now I just hear so much and I'm in love with sound. A lot of people probably just think that's crazy, but I'll hear something that maybe ten other people will not hear. Or I'll remember your entire solo or the sound of your voice from the instant I hear it.

MD: That, of course, relates to the aspect of listening and reacting on the bandstand to the other musicians.

Kim: Yes. And what's amazing to me is that musicians communicate with each other outside the music as if they were still playing the music. Nikki and I can have a conversation, and through the whole thing we'll have this complete rhythm and a total intuitive understanding that's almost telepathic. It's exactly how we play.

MD: Let's talk about gear. Does the Beyoncé gig require a bigger kit than what you'd play with Kenny Barron or Mike Stern?

Kim: Oh, yeah. With Kenny, I played a 14" snare and an 18" bass drum with a 10" rack tom and 14" floor tom. I had all Zildjian K Constantinoples on his gig. With Mike, it's a 20" bass drum, 14" snare, 10" rack tom, 14" and 16" floor toms, and cymbals all across the board. With Beyoncé, it's a 22" bass drum, a 14" snare, and 10", 12", and 16" toms.

All of my drums are Yamaha. I've been with them for about five years. They've been very supportive, and they've been able to get the gear out to me anywhere, which is very important for me because Kenny Barron plays worldwide, Mike Stern plays worldwide, and Beyoncé—forget about it.

MD: Do you have any advice for young drummers who are now in school and thinking about one day being in your shoes, being on the New York scene and touring internationally with big-name artists?

Kim: They need to follow their heart and land on their feet. They need to stay grounded, and when they're going through something, they shouldn't get caught up in that nonsense because it's not real anyway. Stay true to what you hear and what you feel, because the world needs that. It's a growing process. It's not going to happen overnight, but you keep taking steps forward and grow.

Don't think about money. Don't think about petty competition. Focus on being disciplined and working on your goal of becoming a better musician. And do it through love, not hate.

MD: Anything else?

Kim: Yeah: Practice…always!

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Nikki Glaspie continued from page 55

than fusion, but it was called fusion because they were fusing it with something else. So I got way into that.

I was actually in a salsa band when I first got to Berklee in 2001. I was totally into Horacio Hernandez at the time, and I learned left-foot clave, just trying to emulate his style of playing. And then people would start calling me for other gigs, so I had to start playing funk, rock, hard rock—whatever the gig called for. It was good training for the Fuze gig. And I applied what I learned from him to those other gigs.

MD: Were drums your first instrument?

Nikki: Yes. I started playing when I was two. I played other instruments too growing up, but my dad says I was always obsessed with the drums.

MD: When did you get your first kit?

Nikki: I got my first real full-size kit when I was around eight years old. And from that point I was playing in the church alongside my mom, who played keyboards.

MD: Where was this?

Nikki: That was in Germantown, Maryland, in Montgomery County. And then I moved to North Carolina for high school. That's still home, because that's where my mom is. It was in high school where I got really heavily into marching band. I was also in symphonic band, concert band, jazz band, the orchestra pit for musicals.... I even played with the chorus. And that was all good training for Berklee.

MD: Were you studying privately before you got to Berklee?

Nikki: No. I didn't have any lessons before I got to Berklee. Prior to that, I only played Gospel music. In fact, I was only listening to Gospel, because I'm from a very religious family.

MD: Can you describe the style of drumming that would be appropriate for Gospel music in the church?

Nikki: Actually, the thing about Gospel is that they're

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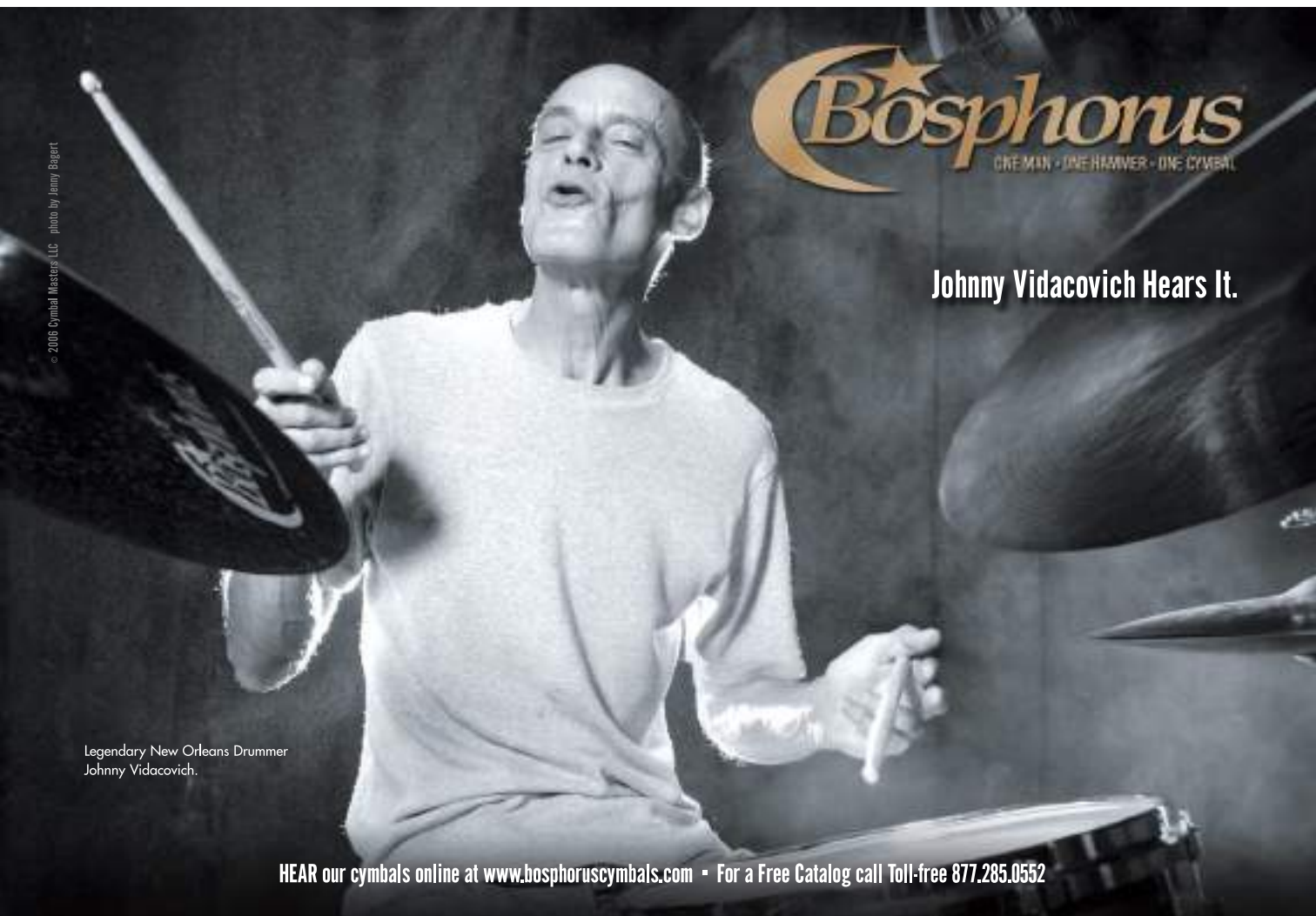
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playing things that I didn't know about, stuff I hadn't really heard outside of the church. And I played in a whole bunch of churches before Berklee.

MD: So at that point you knew you were going to be a drummer?

Nikki: Not really. I just knew I loved it and wanted to play. Actually, when I was in high school I wanted to be a heart surgeon. But three months before I graduated I got my acceptance letter from Berklee and I was like, "I'm gonna go."

My whole thing was I wanted to do something to help people. And my first inclination was, "Oh, I'll become a doctor because I can help people that way." But later I came to realize that I could help people through music, because music is a healing agent. I believe firmly in that. So at the moment I got the letter from Berklee I thought, "This is what I feel, this is what my heart is telling me to do. I'm gonna go."

MD: How did you become aware of Berklee?

Nikki: I was at a revival meeting at Northeast Baptist Church, and this pastor came up to me and said, "You're a talented drummer. You should check out the University Of Miami and the Berklee College Of Music." So I went to the Berklee Web site, asked for an application and a brochure, and I was like, "Wow! This really seems like a cool school."

As it turns out, I was more impressed by the environment than the schooling itself. Being around all these musicians eager to do the same thing was very inspiring to me. But I would say that Wally's was really my school. I'd go down there and watch these cats rip, and it was so funky I could feel it. And I thought, "I wanna do this!"

MD: Were there any other music-listening epiphanies that happened during that period?

Nikki: I heard Bootsy Collins & The Rubber Band and really flipped out. Their groove is so thick; I couldn't believe it. It's like a big mosh. I love playing funk, and I'm also a huge rocker. If I had any styles to choose to play, it would be rock and funk, just straight-up, four on the floor all night long.

MD: What were some key examples of those styles of playing for you?

Nikki: For funk, definitely Bootsy. I can't even explain how funky he is. I just feel it so much. And for rock, Dave Grohl is my hero. I love him. He's an awesome drummer, a great songwriter, singer, guitarist, arranger, bass player, producer—he's everything. What he hears, what comes out of him, is so amazing.

MD: And these are some of the bands that you started hearing for the first time at Berklee?

Nikki: Yeah. I would find something and just immerse myself in it. At some point I came across Nirvana, which was big for me. You have to understand, I was really sheltered in high school. One of my best friends was like, "Yo, you don't know who The Smashing Pumpkins are? You don't know who Marilyn Manson is?" I wasn't listening to that sort of thing or playing it at the time because of where I came from. I couldn't fully express it or listen to it around my parents.

MD: When you got to Berklee, did you realize what you had to get together in terms of technique on your instrument?

Nikki: I had to learn about playing a groove, locking inside of a groove, and keeping time. I had to get all of that together. And some chops, too.

MD: Did you woodshed with a metronome at that point?

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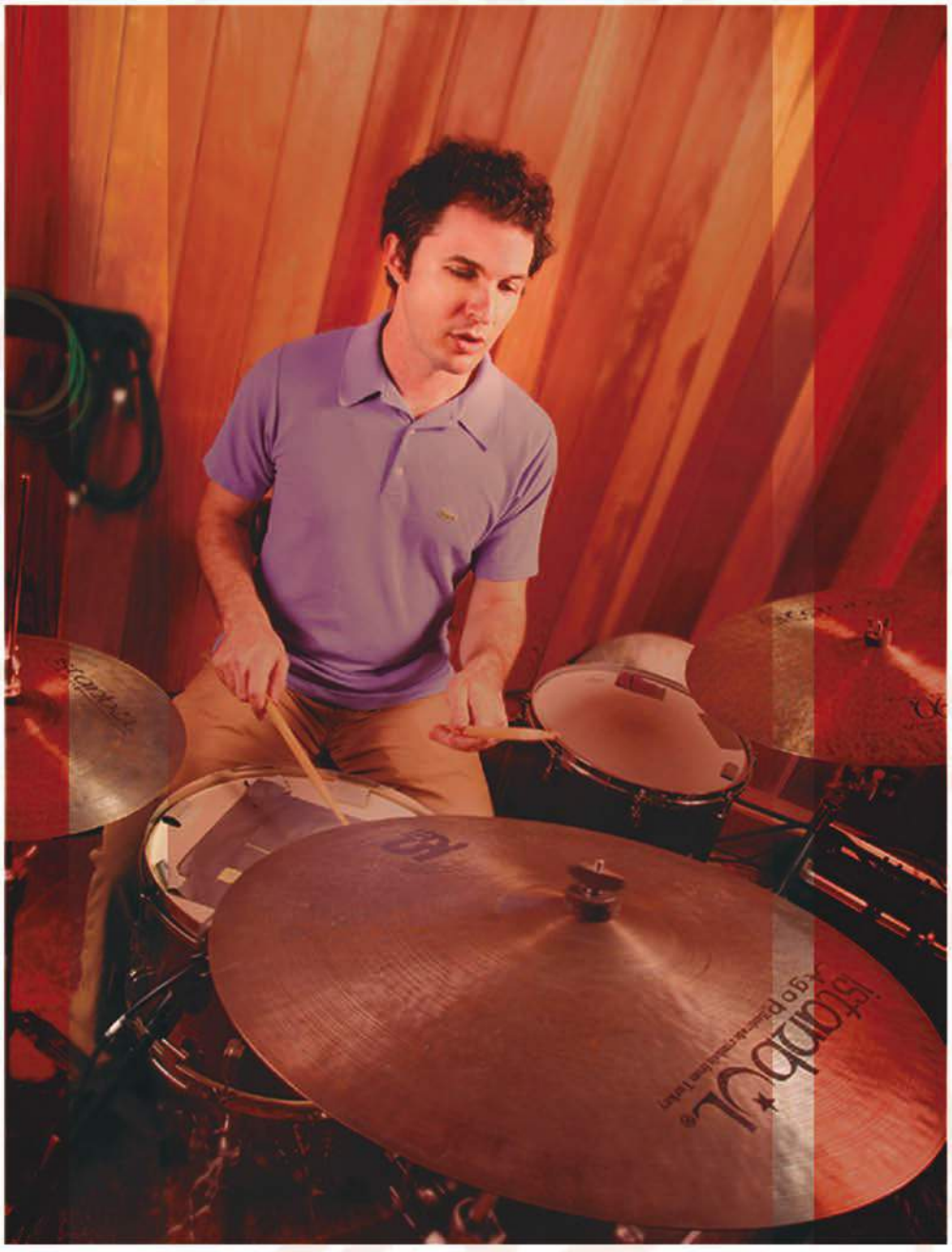

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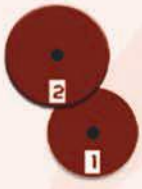

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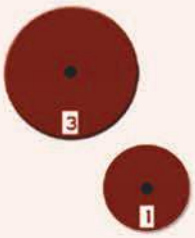

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Nikki: No. I developed my technique just by playing. I never really shedded. I'm a big listener; that's really how I practice. I listen to something until I know it. A lot of what I do has to do with my ears and what I can hear. If I can sing it, I can play it.

MD: What other situations have you played in since your Berklee days?

Nikki: I played in this band with Martin Luther, who's in The Roots. He calls the style of music soul rebel. We basically rock out and he's singing soul on top of it. There's a little mellow R&B vibe in there, too.

The group I've been in the longest is The Sam Kinninger Band. I've been playing with those guys for four years. The band features Amy Bowles on keyboards and Aaron Bellamy on bass. Aaron is sick. We've played everything together—rock, funk, metal. He was originally a metal guitarist, way into Slayer and Metallica. And then he started playing funk bass, which is dope. And when we get together to write, all kinds of things come out. And Sam, of course, is a seriously powerful saxophone player. We'd been doing a lot of gigs on the jam-band scene before I hooked up with Beyoncé.

MD: How long were you at Berklee?

Nikki: I went there from 2001 to 2002, took a year off, and then went back for a couple more semesters. I ultimately left the school in 2004 and moved to Brooklyn last December.

MD: How has your playing changed since those Berklee days?

Nikki: I definitely sound different. I think I'm constantly evolving, which is exciting. That's the great thing about music; you can never learn enough. I know I'm young and that this is the opportunity of a lifetime. To be able to hit the stage with such a big artist and generate that kind of energy out to an audience of thousands is wonderful.

MD: How are you and Kim working as a dual-drummer thing in this band?

Nikki: It's awesome! Even very early on we started playing the same stuff instinctively. And it was really cool because I'd look over at her and she'd look at me and we'd be like, "Yo, we just played the exact same thing. That's *crazy*."

MD: Did you know Kim before you met her on this gig?

Nikki: No, but I'd heard her and was a fan, definitely. So it's awesome playing with her because she comes from a totally different place from me. I'm the rock-funk-metal element and she's the jazz element.

MD: Is your equipment changing for this Beyoncé gig?

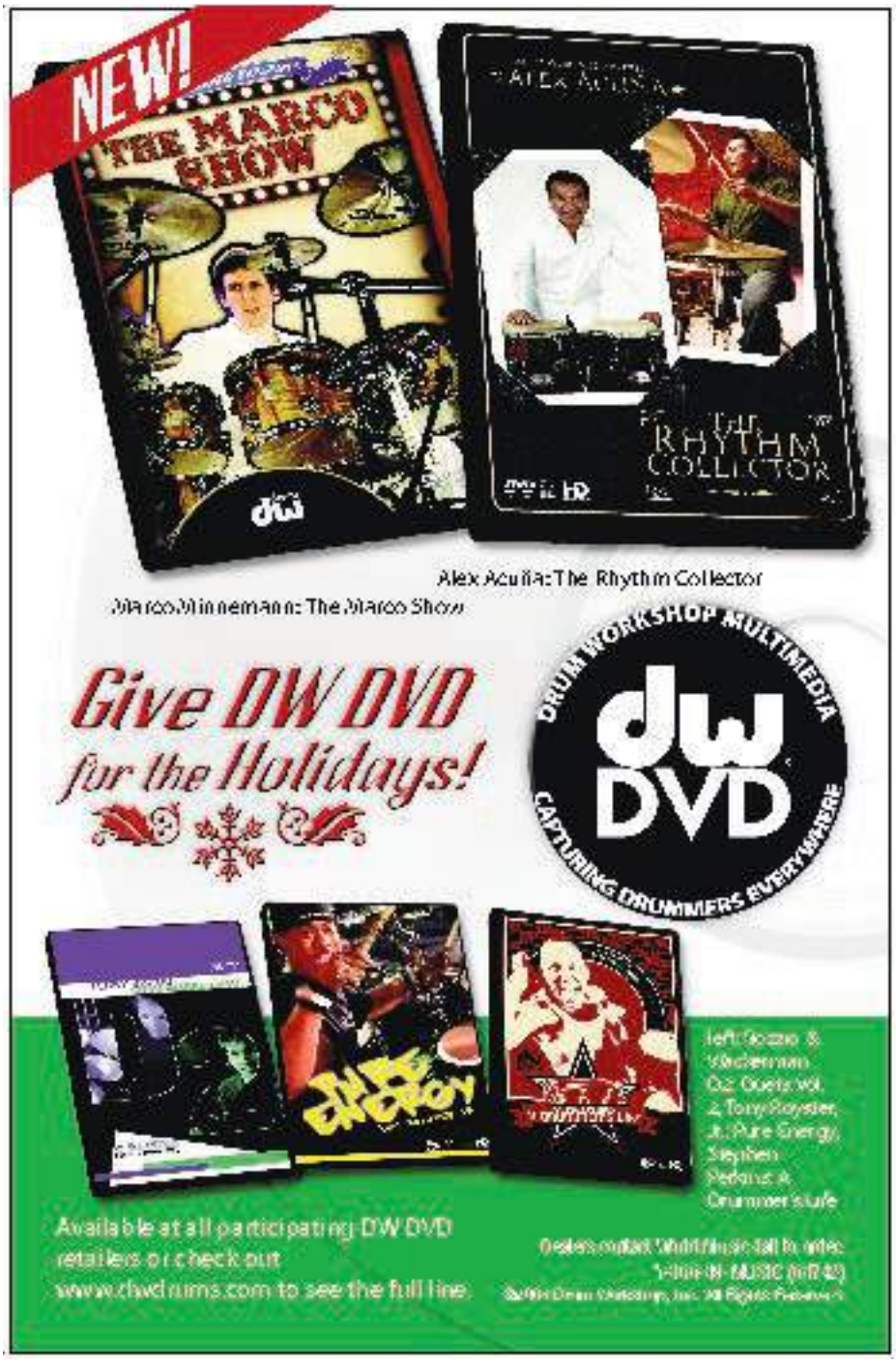
Nikki: Yeah. Normally I play a three-piece Yamaha kit—snare, floor tom, kick. It's simple. But now I'm playing a six-piece.

With Fuze I would use a four-piece kit. With Sam I always have a small three-piece kit, like a hip-hop kind of ?uestlove kit. He's been a big influence too. I have lots of influences, just because I listen so much to so many different types of music.

MD: Who were some of your other key influences?

Nikki: Eric Krasno, the guitarist in Soulive, was a large influence. I played in his band, which is pretty big on the jam-band scene. My biggest influence musically is J Dilla. He died in February and I never got to meet him, but I continue to learn from his music. He was a big producer of artists like Jay-Z, A Tribe Called Quest, and Slum Village.

My absolute favorite musician that I had the honor of playing with is Jeff Lockhart.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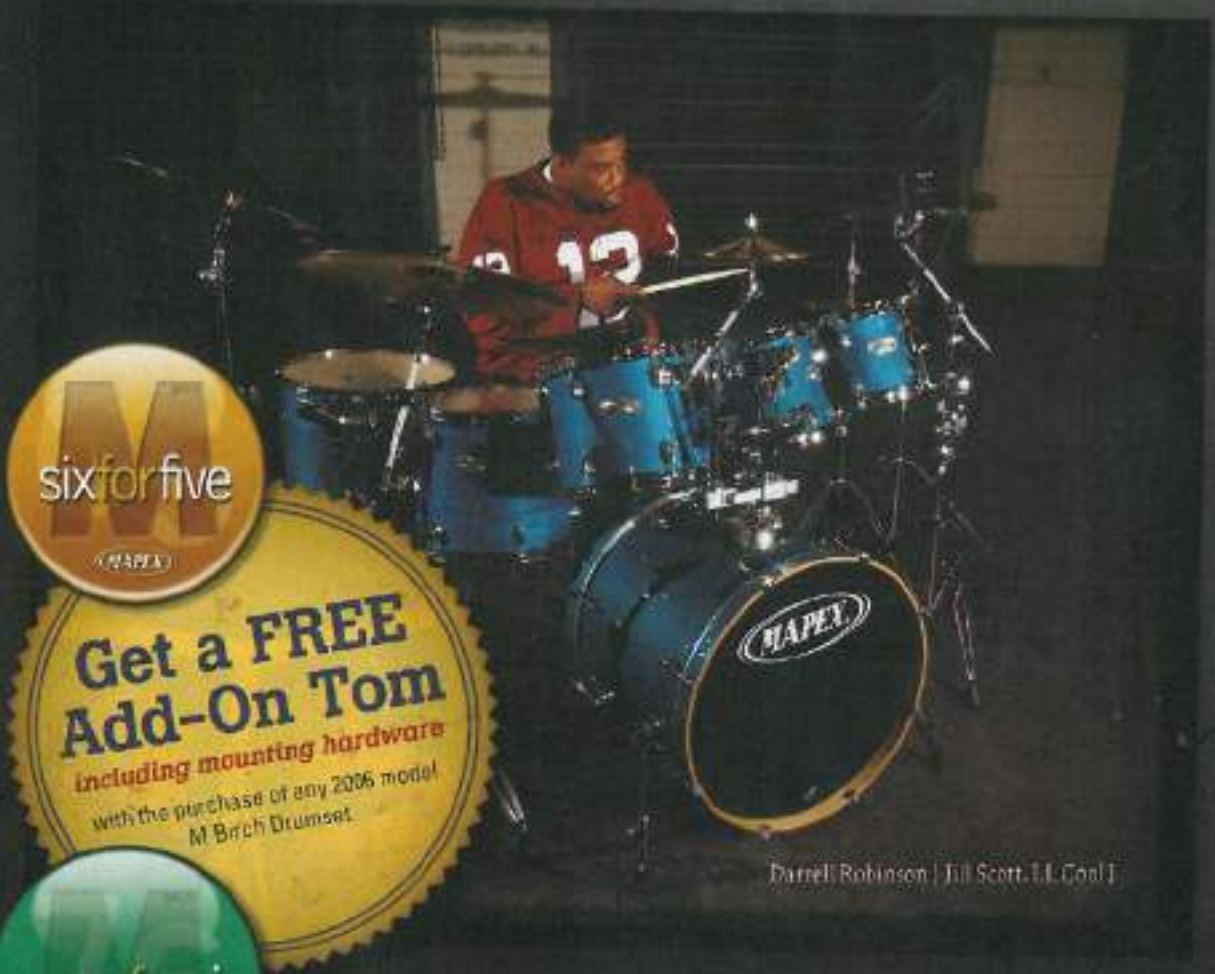
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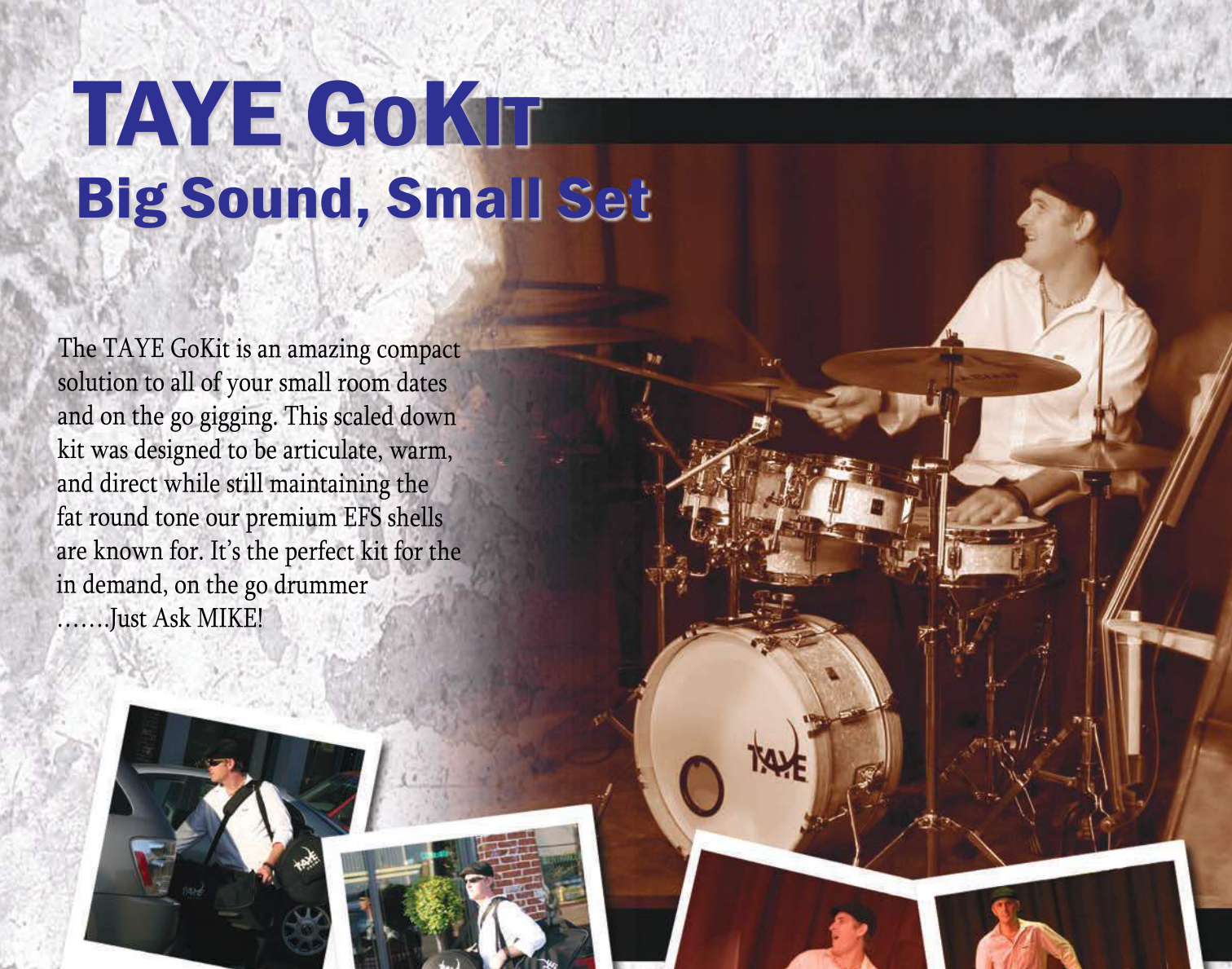

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Nikki Glaspie

He taught me about the concept of space, which is basically knowing when to play and when not to. And when he's playing it feels *so* good. He makes the guitar scream and cry. He makes it come alive.

Another big influence is Doobie Powell. He's a Gospel artist in Connecticut, and when people like Lonnie Smith and Billy Preston would come to town, he would invite them to a jam session and play organ. Doobie has a couple of brothers named Kevin and Billy Powell, who are all ridiculous musicians. These guys are all amazing, but they only play music in the church.

MD: Any jazz influences?

Nikki: I'm not the biggest jazzhead, but I definitely like Tony Williams and Elvin Jones. So they've been an influence on me, but so has John Bonham and a lot of other classic rock drummers. In general, I don't swing, I rock out. But I'm certainly grateful to Tony and Elvin for conveying that spirit of playing with power on the kit.

MD: Have you gotten inspiration from any women drummers who came before you?

Nikki: Yeah, Terri Lyne Carrington is dope. There's no doubt about that. She has definitely paved the way for female musicians, and I'm very grateful to her for that.

MD: Any advice for younger players trying to make it?

Nikki: Well, *I'm* a young drummer, but I've been playing drums for twenty years, so I feel like a veteran in a way. But I would say that what is key is listening and playing space. A lot of drummers just whip through their phrases and there's no breath to it.

I'm really excited because the Beyoncé gig is a totally different scene altogether. It's a totally different ballgame, where you set up every section and everything's clean and crisp and straight and has a very particular sound. So it's a totally new attitude for me. Beyoncé's previous drummer, Gerald Heyward, is one of the baddest cats on the planet. So Kim and I have some really big shoes to fill coming in here after him.

MD: It sounds like you're getting a real education on this gig.

Nikki: Oh yeah, I feel like I'm in graduate school right now, and it's awesome. I mean, I never played every day for eleven hours, like we did when rehearsing for this tour. My left hand feels totally different from all of that work. I just can't wait for the gigs to start. Kim and I hit the stage and rip.

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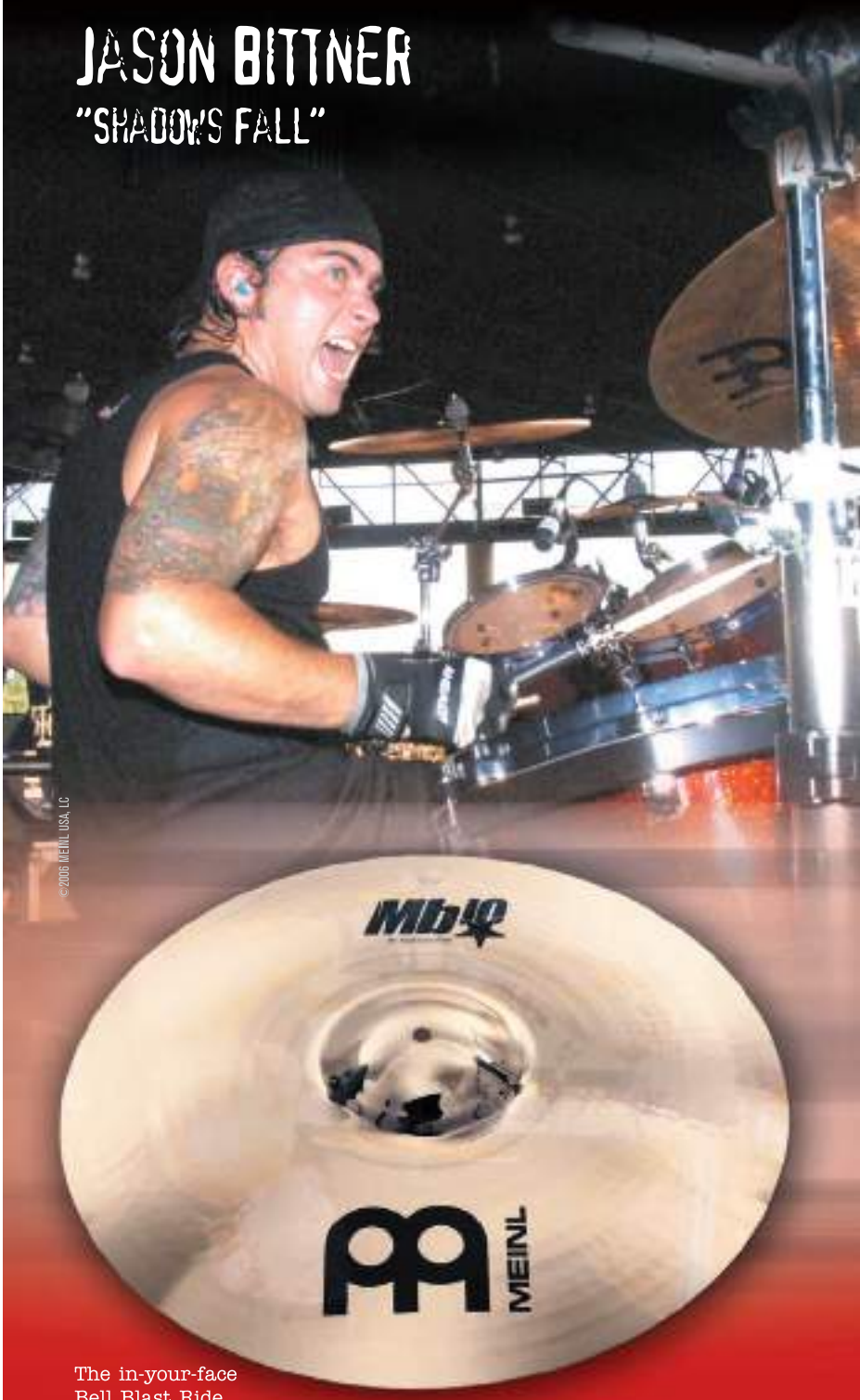
JASON BITTNER
"SHADOWS FALL"



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Yamaha Craftsman Profile

Job Title: Production Control Manager

Years Experience: 13 Years

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Yamaha Artist Profiles

Nikki Glaspie

When NIKKI has worked with Beyoncé, Prince & Sheryl Crow Band

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Kim Thompson

When Kim has worked with Beyoncé, Mike Stern, Kenny Rogers, Wallace Roney

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Rocky Gray of EVANESCENCE

Rock stardom may be a cool thing, but to Rocky Gray, it's the music—and playing his own parts—that matters.

All it took was one wildly propulsive radio single to plaster drummer Rocky Gray's performances all over the musical map. His band, the Little Rock–based alternative rock act Evanescence, entered with its commercial radio knock-out nearly four years ago via an epic hit, "Bring Me To Life," on its Wind-Up debut, *Fallen*. Though Gray didn't perform on the recording—session ace Josh Freese was the album's drummer—his ubiquitous presence behind the drumkit on network television shows and in print helped drive the band to staggering notoriety. The six-times platinum album also found Gray—already a veteran musician from the Little Rock music scene—on the road for well over two years with Evanescence.

After over a year off and some studio time, Gray has returned with Evanescence's follow-up, *The Open Door*. The band's first album without primary songwriter and guitarist Ben Moody, who exited the band in 2003, *The Open Door* marks another significant first, as it's Gray's major recording debut. The album's first single, "Call Me When You're Sober," finds the drummer laying a punishing backbeat atop a groove that effortlessly slides behind the commanding vocals of frontwoman Amy Lee.

But Gray isn't all brawn behind his Tama kit. He stays incredibly mindful of guitarists John LeCompt and Terry Balsamo while infusing healthy dynamics, thanks in part to producer Dave Fortman, who had also produced *Fallen*.

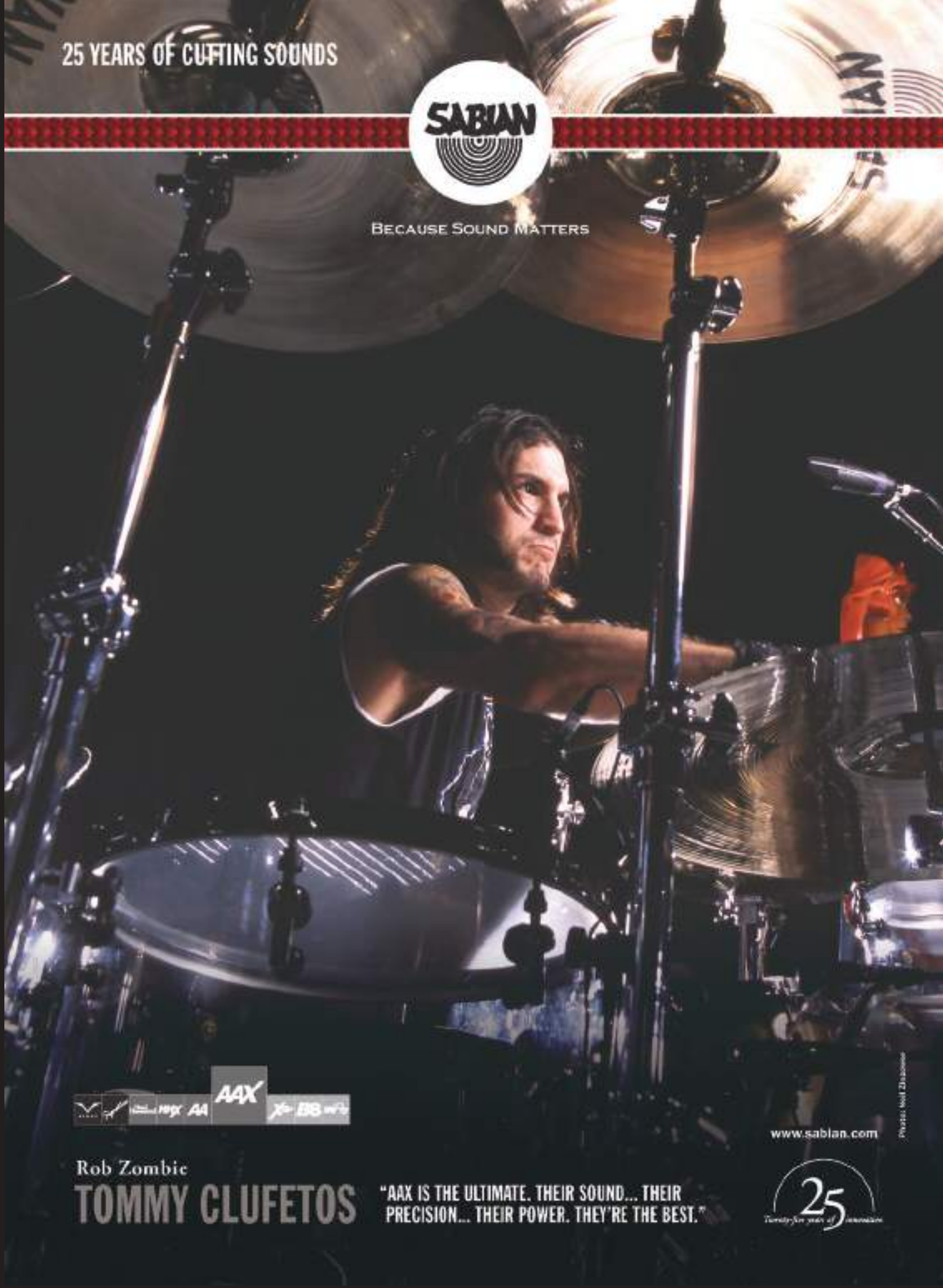
"It's KISS's fault: When I saw them live, it was all over," Gray says about his introduction to drumming. "In 1984, I saw KISS and The Plasmatics in St. Louis, and that was pretty much it. Eric Carr was there with his big kit, and that was just the bomb for me."

Nearly twenty-three years later, Gray looks to make several percussive explosions of his own. And when he's perched behind his bandmates on stage, there's not a chance of avoiding any awesome musical shrapnel.

Story by Waleed Rashidi
Photos by Paul La Raia

MD: What was growing up in Little Rock like for you as a professional musician?
Rocky: There was a big music scene here in the late '90s and the early 2000s. It's slowed down now, but when it was big, it was good for everybody. I was playing in five or six bands. But as soon as it got big, it started trailing off pretty quickly.

Living Sacrifice and Evanescence are probably the biggest things to have come out of here. As many good bands as there are, I think a lot of people find that it's very hard to make it from around here. If you want to make it from this area, you have to get into the van and tour all over the place. A lot of these bands now are younger guys, and they're going to find out that the weekend van tour takes a toll on you. But the guys who will make it are the guys who stick with it.
MD: When did you join Evanescence?
Rocky: I was doing some session work here in Little Rock years ago. Evanescence, before they had even done their *Origin* record [in 2000]—this was before *Fallen*—were getting some songs together. And I ended up working with Ben and Amy at the studio. Ever since then, I've been working with Ben off and on. Five years ago I came in and became pretty much permanent.
MD: And they put you on board right after *Fallen* had come out?
Rocky: Yeah, they needed to get a touring band together. They were out in LA, so it was a lot easier for them to hire someone like Josh Freese to come into the studio and record his things in two days, as opposed to me coming in and trying to do my thing. After they were done with *Fallen*, they called me up and said, "Let's go."
MD: Tell me about getting your parts together for *The Open Door*.
Rocky: Amy and Terry would get demos together for me and send them out to Little Rock. I'd listen to them, and on a lot of the songs, it wasn't obvious where the drums should go. So when we got into the studio, everything was still being arranged. It was pretty cool putting my parts in, because it was the first time anybody had heard a drum part on a given song, so everybody was really excited about that.
MD: You'd been playing the parts off the *Fallen* songs for a while, so *The Open Door* is your chance to start fresh with your own parts. Was there anything you wanted to do differently from *Fallen*?
Rocky: I knew from the get-go that this would be a completely different type of record. So anything that anybody had done with them before wasn't even in my mind. I knew I could put one hundred percent of *me* into the song. It was real easy. Terry is a completely different guitar player than Ben. He plays more of a metal style—not that Ben wasn't metal at all—but it was real easy to lock in with his guitar parts.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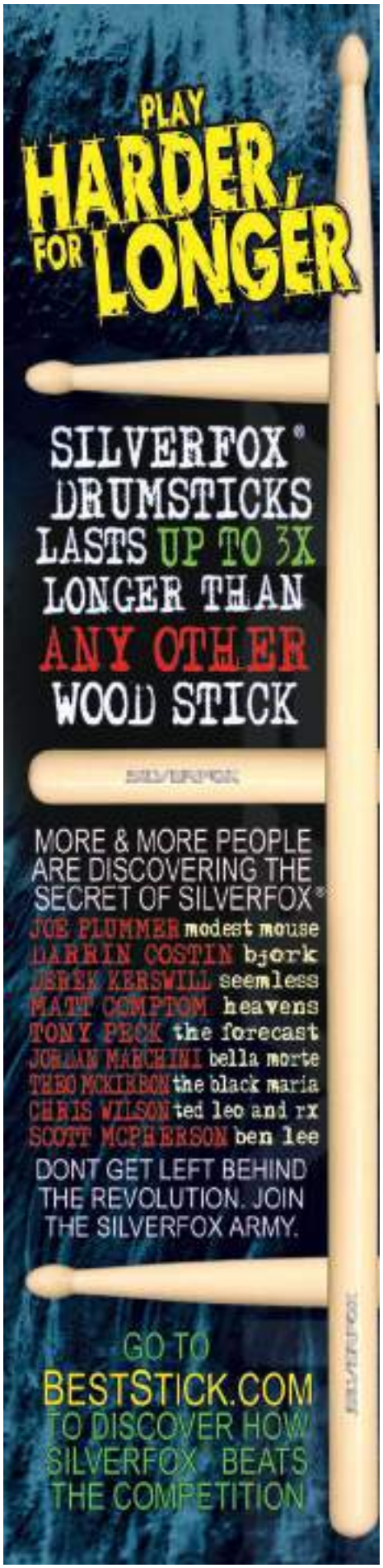

Rocky Gray

MD: I understand that you originally started as a professional guitarist.

Rocky: I've always been both, but I started making money as a guitar player in Living Sacrifice. And that's how Ben and I got started, because Ben was a fan of Living Sacrifice.

MD: Were you a drummer or guitarist first?

Rocky: I was always playing drums, but when I got my first real kit, my little brother got an electric guitar at the same time, so there was always that electric guitar around. I could always go and play his guitar. I've been on both instruments for about the same amount of time.

MD: What sorts of advantages do you think you have over a drummer who doesn't play guitar?

Rocky: I don't know if there are any advantages. I just know that my way of thinking about drum parts is more like a guitar riff. I'm thinking in terms of writing a riff for the drums. It's also real easy for me to lock in with a guitar player.

MD: Are you a formally trained drummer?

Rocky: I only had a year of intermediate drumming in junior high on the snare

Drums: Tama Superstar Custom in Titanium Fade finish
- **A.** 5½x12 snare
- **B.** 7x14 Starclassic G Maple snare
- **C.** 7x8 tom
- **D.** 8x10 tom
- **E.** 9x12 tom
- **F.** 16x16 floor tom
- **G.** 16x18 floor tom
- **H.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 12" AA Mini-Chinese
2. 14" HHX Evolution hi-hats
3. 12" HHX Evolution splash
4. 17" AA Metal X crash
5. 10" HHX Evolution splash
6. 19" AA Metal X crash
7. 14" HHX Evolution Mini-Chinese
8. 20" HHX Evolution ride
9. 18" AA Metal X Chinese

Hardware: Tama, including an Iron Cobra double pedal with plastic beaters

Heads: Evans Power Center on snare batter, Hazy 300 snare-side (tuned high, no muffling), Hydraulics on tom batters with Resonant black heads on bottoms (tuned to a "natural" pitch, no muffling), EMAD clear on bass drum batter, Resonant black on front (tuned low, EQ Pads on front and batter heads, AF Patches)

Sticks: Vater XD-5A (hickory with nylon tip)

Electronics: ddrum module and triggers, Wirges pads

Microphones: Audio-Technica, Ultimate Ears in-ear monitors

drum. And I even failed that!

MD: You failed music?

Rocky: It was because of the homework: I was a bad student. I didn't like school at all. My mind was always somewhere else.

MD: What was it like working with Dave Fortman?

Rocky: It was awesome. He's a great drummer as well; we spent a lot of time on the drums. And Dave had a lot of cool ideas for fills and things like that. Thankfully I was able to pop off anything he wanted to hear. Like, if I'd do one thing, and he wanted to hear three more takes with something completely different on each, I could do it. I think he really enjoyed taking advantage of having other options. So yeah, we bounced ideas back and forth on every song. It was so much fun, it almost wasn't work.

MD: Anything specific you told Dave about your drums for this album session?

Rocky: I pretty much left it up to him. He had just finished doing the Mudvayne record, which sounded incredible. There wasn't anything I could say that Dave didn't already know. I let him handle it.

But as far as my playing on the record, I put up a note on a music stand that said, "W.W.L.D."—what would [Metallica drummer] Lars [Ulrich] do—especially on the *Black* album. I went in with the mentality of keeping it powerful and not going crazy or ridiculous; just keep it powerful with the kick and snare. And I think that helped me a lot. Lars went from playing all that awesome, crazy stuff on *...And Justice For All* to laying back and hitting the snare as hard as he could on the "Black" album. That kind of helped me answer, "Where should I go with this?"

> "If you practice right, you're going to get it right. But if you practice wrong, you're always going to play it wrong."

MD: Which kit did you use to record the album?

Rocky: I used the kit that people can see in the DVD [*Anywhere But Home*], which is a maple Tama Starclassic. I broke it way down to keep it simple. I wanted the record to be really powerful, so I didn't want too much stuff to go crazy with. Because if it's in front of me, I'm going to hit it! [laughs]

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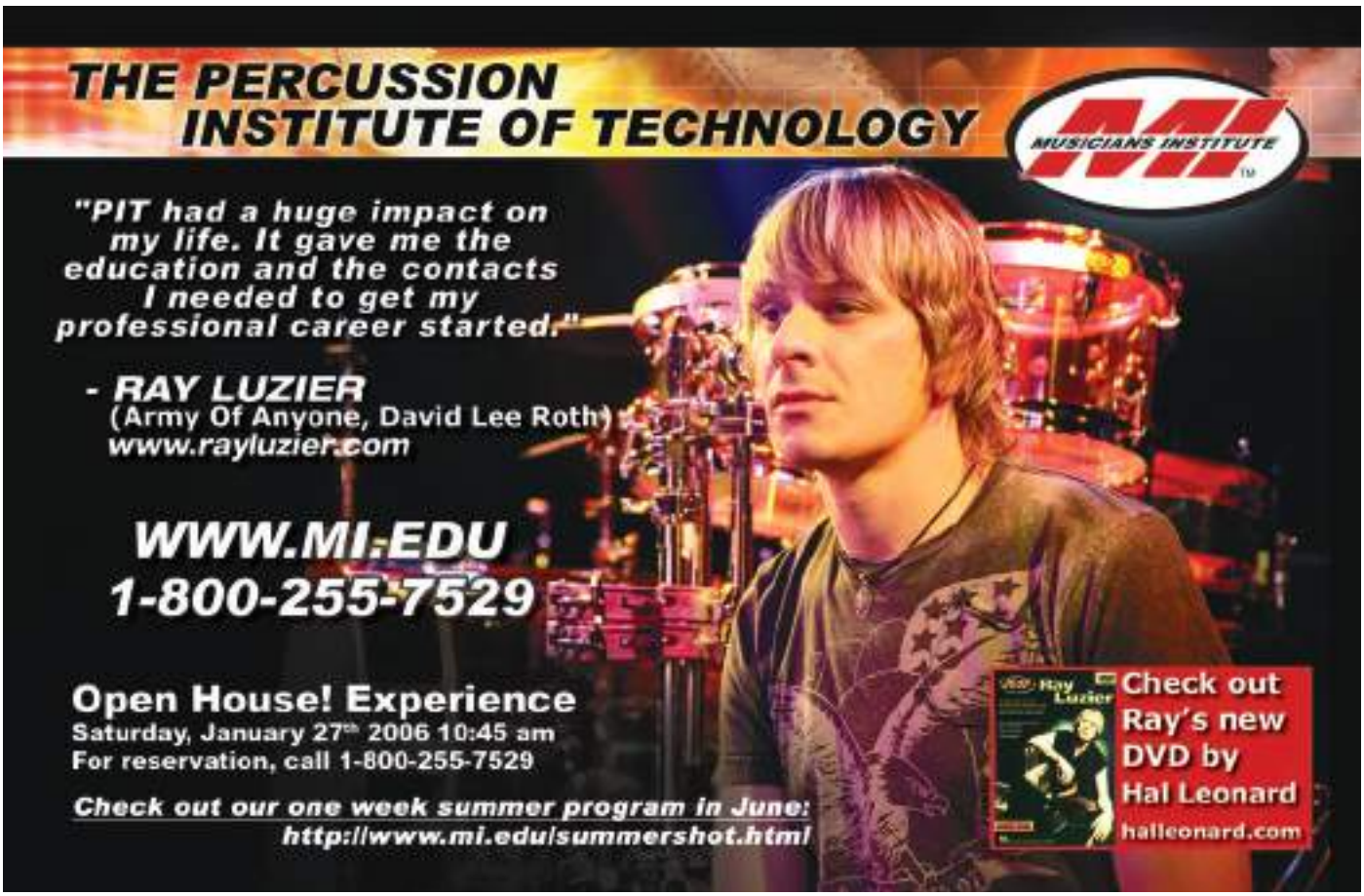
So I played a five-piece kit on the record—10", 12", and 16" toms with a 22" kick and a $6\frac{1}{2}$" bell brass snare, all Tama gear and hardware. I think that breaking the kit down helped me to have the power that I needed. It was always just a five-piece with a double pedal.

MD: But you usually play two separate kick drums live.

Rocky: I just adapt to whichever situation I'm playing in. Once I start playing, I can't tell the difference. I don't focus on, "Wow, this feels weird." I just do what I've got to do, really. If it's one kick, I'll make it happen. If it's two, I'll make that happen. That said, it's harder to have the two kick drums sound the same. I'm into consistency, and that's one of the disadvantages of two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kicks—it's harder to get the same sound out of two kick drums.

MD: Do you use that same bell brass snare live?

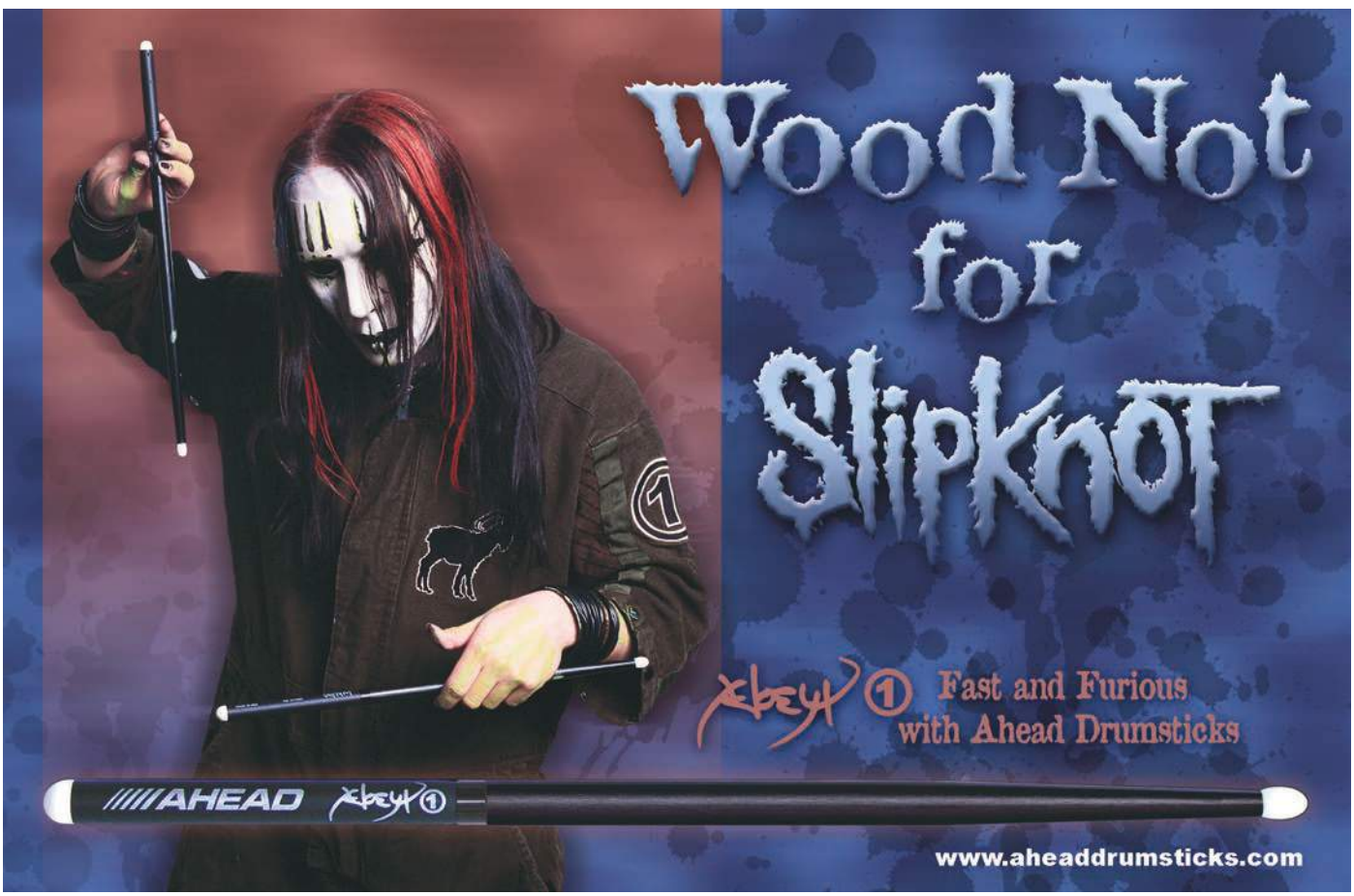
Rocky: That drum was mainly for this recording. Dave and I knew it was the snare we could get that kind of power out of. But I've got about ten snares that I bring out on the road with me. I'm getting a custom Tama Starclassic G Maple snare made, too. It'll be 7x14, which is really cool. I'm looking forward to playing that drum.

MD: And what about your cymbal setup?

Rocky: For crashes, I'm using Sabian Metal X models live. I use the Dark crashes in the studio, but I'm not so sure they'll hold up in a live situation. The Metal X haven't let me down at all. They sound good and they hold up. I've been playing a lot of Sabian Evolution stuff live, too. Right now, I've pretty much fallen in love with the Evolution 20" ride. It's got a lot of wash to it but you still hear the stick sound.

MD: So why the larger kit on stage?

Rocky: There's really no reason for it, besides the way it looks. And I change it up all the time. Next year's kit will be dif-



ferent from last year's. I like to keep it different, just to keep it interesting for me. If I'm having fun back there, everybody's going to feel it. This year's setup will be one kick, three rack toms, two floor toms, and a load of cymbals.

MD: When you're on the road, what do you do to keep yourself in check?

Rocky: I stretch a little before I go on stage. Pretty much the only thing I do that would be considered an exercise is that during soundcheck, once the set is done, I'll play a couple of Slayer or Sepultura songs. That keeps me pretty warmed up. You know, "Reign In Blood," "Seasons In The Abyss," "Angel Of Death"—all that good stuff.

MD: Are there any albums you spin to help motivate yourself before the show?

Rocky: Sometimes we like to listen to Pantera's *Vulgar Display Of Power*, *Iowa* from Slipknot—real speedy, powerful stuff like that. Terry's a big fan of Pantera, and you can't beat that for getting warmed up.

MD: How have you noticed your drumming change in recent years?

Rocky: I think, as we've continued on, I've learned how to play better. Once we got into it, I was pretty much there. Not that I can't improve, because I definitely want to be better. This year I'm going to really try to lift my game.

MD: What does "better" mean for you?

Rocky: I've always been a big fan of ghost notes and things like that. And a lot of people don't get that—some people don't even hear ghost notes. But as a drummer, I think it's awesome when you hear those consistent ghost notes all the time. I've definitely improved on that, which I've always wanted to. And you can hear it on the new record, too.

Some of the things I want to be better at are the things that people want to hear, like all of the double kick stuff. I want to be like [Slayer's] Dave Lombardo and [Lamb Of God's] Chris Adler. I think they're pretty incredible, and I look up to those guys.

MD: You're quite a dynamic drummer. Do you find it hard to lay back on certain grooves in the studio or on stage?

Rocky: It was a lot easier for me to lay back in the studio than live. Live, I'm in show mode and I'm ready to hit stuff. In the studio, it was such a good atmosphere that when the song came up, I could really dial it in my head and I feel it. It was a lot easier for me to get into it and lay back in the track.

MD: How would you describe your double bass performance on *The Open Door*?

Rocky: It's not in-your-face double kick. It's more like locked-in double kick with the guitar. You can hear a little bit of the Tomas Haake/Meshuggah–inspired stuff on there. I don't know, it's thrown into a different type of music, but it's definitely in there. A lot of people won't notice it, but that's where it comes from.

MD: What's your philosophy on getting your drumming skills down?

Rocky: If it's a question about playing, it's all about practice. You practice for a while and then it's all about perfect practice. If you practice right, you're going to get it right after a while. But if you practice wrong, you're always going to play it wrong until you learn to step it up.

It's a tough business, man. Until I got this far into my career, I really didn't know how cutthroat it really is. It's one of those things where someone can be the best musician but not get it going in the business, which is sad. But you'll never know unless you really try to make it happen.

MD: I noticed that you've been involved in other businesses, like clothing.

Rocky: I have a clothing line. I have a

friend who mentioned the idea to me one day. We were bouncing ideas back and forth about shirts for some of my project bands and things like that. He was big about what I was coming up with and thought we should do it. I said, "We can try. Let's go." That became CrimeWave Clothing.

MD: What are your other projects about?

Rocky: John LeCompt and I have done two different side projects together since we've been off—we'd been off for two years. We'd been messing around with some of our boys around town. One of the bands is called Machina and another is called Mourningside.

Mourningside is radio rock with a lot of heavy parts to it. Machina is a little more grungy. It's more like hard rock or metal. I like to put myself into situations where I can stretch a little bit.

MD: Being on the road for so long, how do you balance your road life with regular life?

Rocky: That's a good question, and my wife answers that question whenever I come home from the road. It's not real life out there. You become a cartoon character. People hand you stuff all the time. You're almost not a real person. It gets kind of weird.

But when you come back to the real world, it's like, "Hey, your plate's over there. Go get your own supper. There's no catering line here!" My wife keeps me grounded, and I appreciate her doing that. The whole rock star thing is fine for onstage, but you can't bring it home.

MD: Any other lessons you've learned from being on the road for so long?

Rocky: I learned that it's very hard being gone for a long time when you have a family. It's rough. You miss birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine's Day—it doesn't matter. You're out there working. My wife, she's a blessing, because she understands it. She knows that we've got to do this to pay the bills. It's hard, but you get through it. And you've got to have those people to help you get through it. You can't do it by yourself.

To hear Rocky Gray with Evanescence, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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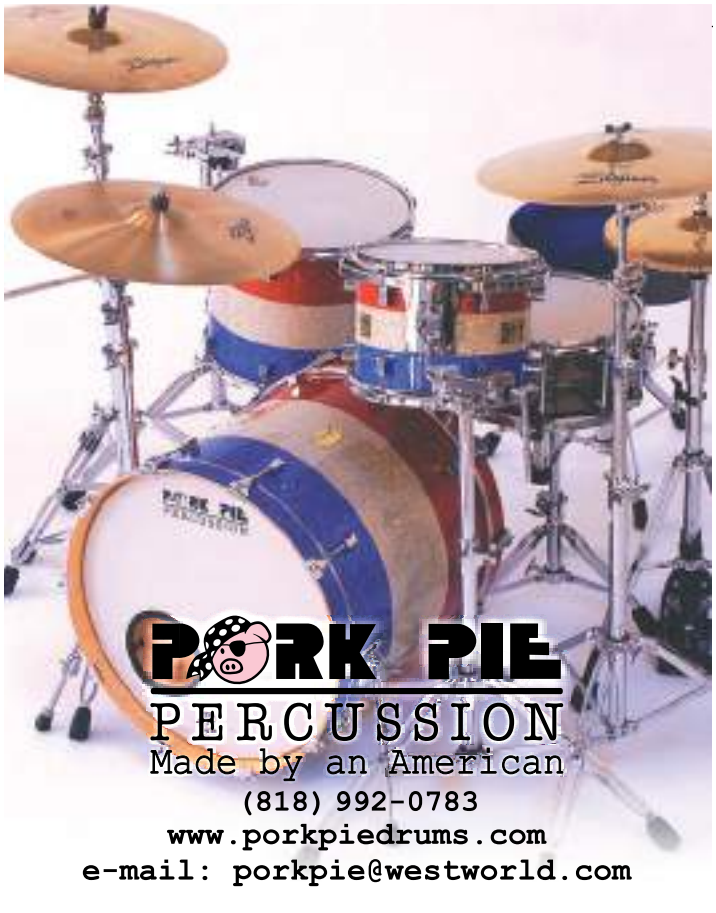

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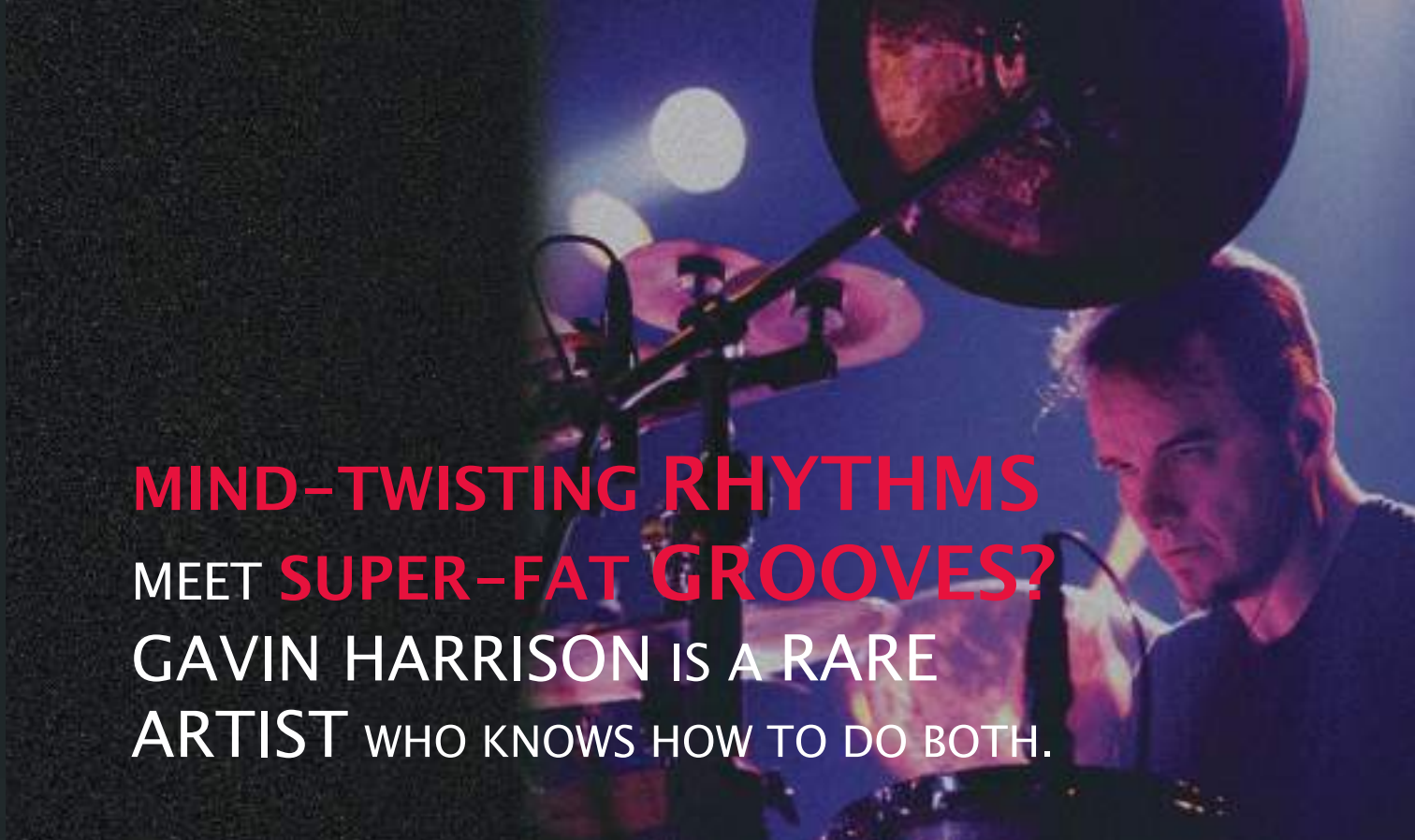


MIND-TWISTING RHYTHMS MEET SUPER-FAT GROOVES? GAVIN HARRISON IS A RARE ARTIST WHO KNOWS HOW TO DO BOTH.

IF you've stumbled across any of British drummer Gavin Harrison's educational books or videos, you'll know that he's deep into some tricky business: rhythmic displacement, rhythmic illusions, and the like. But you have to see him with the band Porcupine Tree, currently creating a stir on tour and on Internet forums, to appreciate that, as difficult as his drumming concepts can get, Gavin's not in the business of trickery. He's into elevating the drums as a musical instrument. Judging from his success, he may well be one of Britain's top drumming exports of the past two decades.

In the repertoire of Porcupine Tree, behind the memorable, often romantic melodies lurk some exceedingly treacherous arrangements. Although there's plenty of improvisation, this is no jam band. It's a tightly honed unit that can stop on a dime. When there's a push, the band pushes as one. When they pump up the volume, they lay waste metal style.

The incredible intricacy behind the power is very much Gavin Harrison's doing. Once you catch him with PT live or on their brand new concert DVD, *Arriving Somewhere*, you'll know that he's the perfect drummer for the band. His fills are pure wizardry, often taking their inspiration from some turn of phrase and launching into brilliant commentary—for example, rapid flurries from floor to rack toms, clattery flutters on rims, or sometimes just simple glissandos with bare fingers against heads, conguero-style.

And that's only the half of it. The other half is the enormous groove and sense of swing, a product of Gavin's refined knowledge of note placement and his close study of groove greats Steve Gadd and Jeff Porcaro. Following in their grand tradition, he makes it all sound simple, no matter how dense and cluttered it gets on stage.

Though Harrison has done similar with Dave Stewart, Lisa Stansfield, Iggy Pop, Level 42, Manfred Mann, Paul Young, and Renaissance, he has really come of age in Porcupine Tree. His mastery is complete, and somewhat bewildering, such as when he's performing some magic 16th-note displacement. Gavin has clearly shuffled the deck of drum technique, an ever-pressing passion, as you'll see in our conversation. No question, he's done some serious woodshedding—as it turns out, in a wooden shed in his dad's backyard.

Harrison's modus operandi is pulling out stray notes and using them as hinges—gateways—to new rhythms. In the wrong hands, this could amount to mere mathematics. For Gavin, however, a tricky accent or a bar of eleven beats must arise from some melody, and it must make musical sense, something he makes very clear on his latest instructional DVD, *Rhythmic Horizons*. Our conversation begins with his growing reputation as a certified rhythmic illusionist.

MD: You've been called a "psychologist of rhythm."

Gavin: That sounds good, but it's absolutely untrue. Because of my writings, such as *Rhythmic Illusions*, perhaps people think I was a professor or something.

MD: But your work involves the *perception* of rhythm, which gets us into psychology.

Gavin: Yes, but I think that the danger is people perceiving you as a smart ass, that you're one of these guys who does everything mathematically and thinks out all these incredible polyrhythms. They also may think that you play stone-cold, with no heart and little groove.

I really like rhythmic *design*; that's the thing that turns me on. The cliché of the drummer as Animal of *The Muppets* smashing the hell out of the drums is fun. I like to do that, too, sometimes. But once you've been doing that for a long time, you start to re-evaluate it.

MD: You mentioned the mathematical aspect. When you composed "Nineteen Days" [*Rhythmic Horizons* DVD], you stumbled on a pattern that attracted you musically. At first, you didn't even know the time signature.

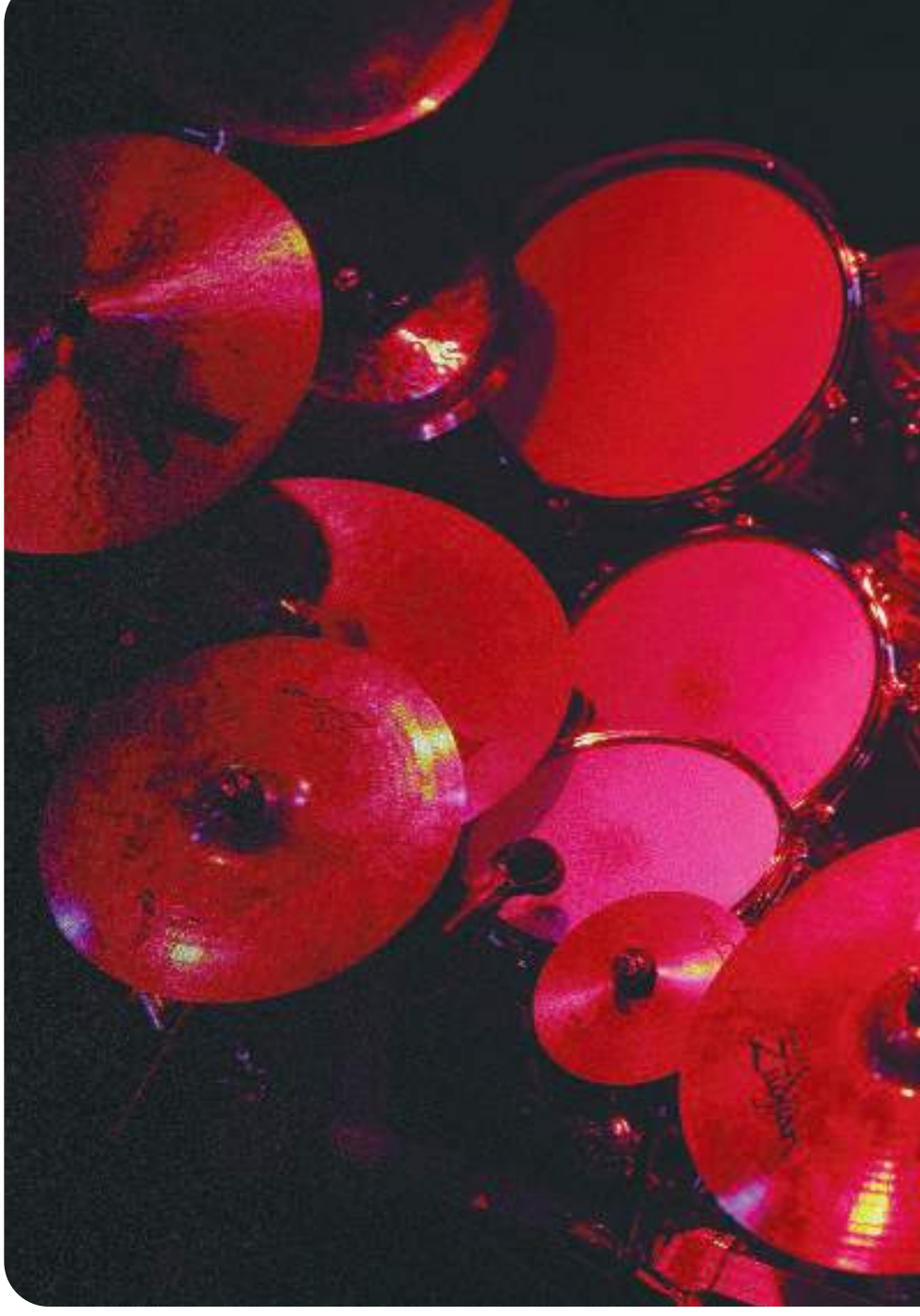
Gavin: I do that all the time. I jam on the drums at home and come up with ideas. I've shied away from the speed and technique area because I could see it wasn't leading me anywhere, apart from being impressive at a drum clinic. The sad ending is that there's always a kid down the street who's faster than you.

My dad, who was a trumpet player, wasn't a flash player who could play high notes. He turned me on to Chet Baker, Miles Davis, and Jim Hall. I could see the beauty in minimalist expression and the effect it had. I wanted to make those emotional effects on the drums, and *that's* when I began to explore displacement, modulation, and doing things on the drums that would make you gasp for air and wonder, What was that?

When I was young, I practiced in a shed, in which my dad had nailed some mattresses, trying to keep the noise down for the neighbors. I enjoyed exploring rhythms. Bringing it back to "Nineteen Days," it comes from closing my eyes and letting things come out. I'd stumble across some idea and I'd like the sound of it. To this day, I would never sit down and say, "Okay, I'm going to write something in 27/16." I'd play patterns that would make me feel certain ways—much like a film director does when he chooses music that's edgy or relaxed. In other words, I'd generate an emotional trigger rather than some traditional drum thing where you apply the rudiments.

For "Nineteen Days," I liked the feel of this pattern. I kept playing it until I managed to press record on a tape machine and get it down. *Then* I worked out the time signature.

My fear of getting lost in a



GAVIN'S GEAR

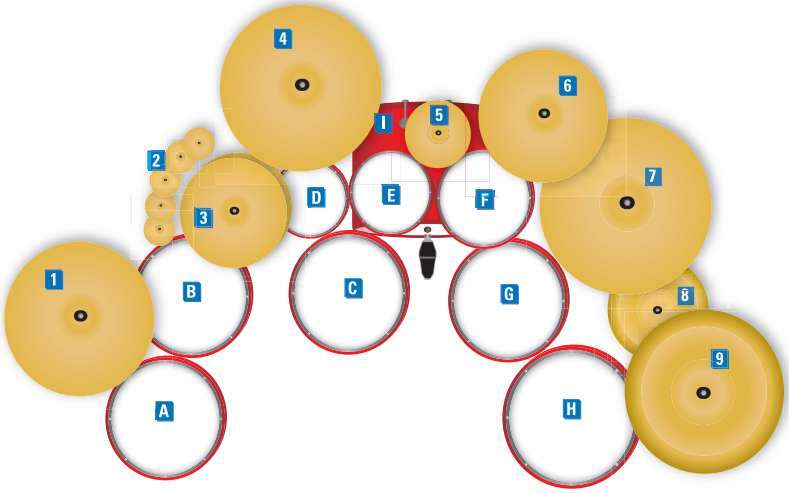
Drums: Sonor Designer in Earth finish
- **A.** 5x12 snare
- **B.** 6x14 Cottonwood snare
- **C.** 5x14 Black Steel snare
- **D.** 8x8 tom
- **E.** 8x10 tom
- **F.** 9x12 tom
- **G.** 12x14 tom
- **H.** 14x16 tom
- **I.** 17x22 bass drum

Heads: Remo Emperor X on snare batters, coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 18" K Custom crash
2. 5" mini custom bells (five)
3. 13" K hi-hats
4. 19" K crash
5. 8" EFX
6. 15" A Custom crash
7. 20" K ride (or old A)
8. 12" Oriental China Trash
9. 18" Z China

Hardware: Sonor, including a Giant Step double pedal, S-Hoops on snare and toms, Hardcase Hardrock cases

Sticks: Vic Firth Rock model



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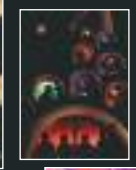
PRIME HARRISON CUTS

Artist	Album
Porcupine Tree	Deadwing
Porcupine Tree	In Absentia
Mick Karn	Tooth Mother
Yasuaki Shimizu	Aduna
Jakko Jakszyk	Bruised Romantic Glee Club



HIS FAVORITES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Art Farmer/Jim Hall	Big Blues	Steve Gadd
Patrick Williams	Threshold	John Guerin
Meshuggah	Destroy Erase Improve	Tomas Haake
Fredrik Thordendal	Special Defects	Morgen Ågren
Randy Crawford	Secret Combination	Jeff Porcaro

GAVIN'S EDUCATIONAL WORKS

Rhythmic Horizons (DVD)
Rhythmic Visions (DVD)
Rhythmic Perspectives (book)
Rhythmic Illusions (book)

band situation made me start thinking about time signatures and the beauty of them. The first time a lot of drummers come across 7/8, they make it sound very stiff, but there's no reason you can't play 7/8 and make it sound as good as 4/4.

MD: I think many of the early prog-rock drummers, like Phil Collins and Bill Bruford, did a pretty good job at it.

Gavin: I didn't really grow up listening to English music. I listened to American music because my dad was a jazz musician and he thought American jazz was so much better. I moved from straight ahead bebop to funk, played by John Guerin, Steve Gadd, Steve Schaeffer, and Harvey Mason. Local guys would play tricky time signatures and it always sounded as if it was hard for them to do, but when you listened to Gadd play in seven, he played it as smooth as he played in four.

Getting back to the design thing, I've always loved when somebody comes up with a drum part that makes sense. I'd ana-

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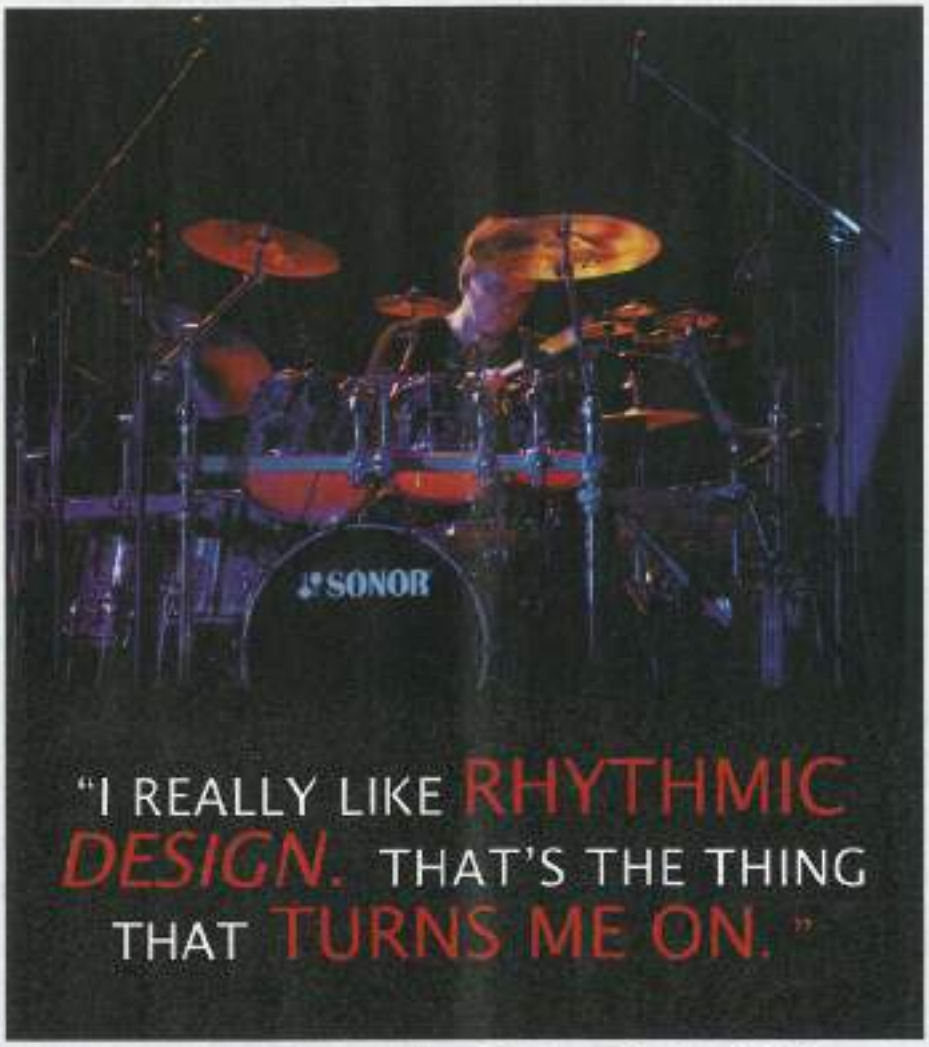
Gavin Harrison



"I REALLY LIKE RHYTHMIC *DESIGN.* THAT'S THE THING THAT TURNS ME ON."

lyze it and write it down. I began to realize that, say, if I altered the start position of a pattern, I'd have a completely different groove. So I'd write out a part starting in different positions in the bar and come up with *five* different grooves. Actually, they were the same groove but *perceived* differently. It was a sort of manipulation.

In the mid-'80s, I started collecting all of these ideas on manipulating perception. A friend of mine came up with the phrase "rhythmic illusion." It got me thinking about raising new ideas. Eventually, I had enough material for a book and began to organize it in terms of what I could call all these various types of manipulations. That became my first book, *Rhythmic Illusions*.

MD: Your execution is very clean, yet there's nothing clinical about it.

Gavin: Maybe some of the readers only know me from Porcupine Tree. But I've spent many, many years on the road. I've done café bar gigs, wedding bands, top-40 bands—anything to make a living, which I've been doing since 1979. I even spent twenty-six weeks playing on top of a double-decker bus promoting a bread company! I wanted to make a living as a drummer, and you've got to be able to play anything.

MD: Speaking of which, I would dearly love to hear how you got involved with Iggy Pop.

Gavin: A friend told me that he was auditioning drummers. I was living in a little apartment and couldn't afford the rent. This music was a long way from the way I was thinking, but I went out and bought two albums, thinking, this really isn't *me*. But they were paying a thousand dollars a week—great money for me. I was the last guy to audition. I hit the drums as hard as I could and played what I thought was the right thing. They called and told me I'd gotten the job. Man, I didn't know if I could last nineteen minutes playing with that kind of force!

One day I had a great experience. During

the day I did an Iggy Pop rehearsal, then at night I subbed at the Ritz in a black jacket on a three-piece Gretsch kit with brushes. I could hardly hear anything, my ears were ringing so much from the Iggy Pop rehearsal!

MD: On your DVDs you display a real economy of motion.

Gavin: When I was young, I studied with a show drummer, Joe Hodson. He was really into precision. He'd have me playing on a coin so that I'd hit the drum consistently in the same place.

Recently, someone wrote me and observed that on one of the DVDs I'd worn a small patch about the size of a coin on each drum. It's not intentional, I just know where the best sound is on the drum. After 25 million hits, I go there without thinking.

That consistency could be misinterpreted as being machine-like. I don't sound *anything* like a machine. I hear people say not to practice with a metronome because it'll make them sound stiff. I tell them they'll sound stiff before they even get the metronome out! Playing well with a metronome won't make you sound stiff; it'll simply improve your sense of time. Since everything we do these days is with a click, it's something you need to be really good at.

There are two things you need to get together if you're a young drummer and you're going to make a living: You need to learn to read, and you need to learn how to play with a click. Forget the quintuplet-64th-note-two-hundred-beats-per-minute bass drums, that's not going to get you a job.

When I joined Renaissance in the early '80s, I answered an ad in *Melody Maker*. They sent me a tape consisting of one piece that was twenty minutes long. I wrote it out and it was eight pages long. I played it at the audition and they told me, "You're the only drummer to be able to play the entire song. Most of the others gave up after a couple of minutes." They had auditioned two hundred drummers! It had taken me a week to write out this one chart, but it's like, if you don't want to give it your best shot, don't bother.

MD: You've got this articulate side, and then you've got this fearless ability to go inarticulate and maybe just buzz the stick or do a finger glissando across the head like a conga player does. So are you a meat-and-potatoes drummer who can play any style, or a musician who's destined to explore the catalog of fascinating rhythmic ideas explained in your DVDs?

Gavin: My passion is the drums. I fell in love when I was six years old. The last thing I thought of was making money or having a career. I wanted to be like my dad, who was a professional musician. I thought that was really hip. I'd go along to the BBC studios and see them make music to nobody—there was no audience. It captured my imagination. Becoming a studio drummer was what I wanted to do.

I get bored easily, especially with the *Groundhog Day* routine of getting out of the bus, finding something to eat, doing the soundcheck.... Nothing interests me more than sitting down and improvising until I come up with something that has a nice shape or design to it. The guys I was listening to, like Steve Gadd or Jeff Porcaro—once all their licks had gone by, I was left with a sense of their enormous musicality and sense of space, balance, and design.

MD: In the '80s, *Modern Drummer* published a series of vinyl sound supplements

continued on page 97

Advanced Polyrhythms

MOVING BEYOND THREES AND FOURS

by Gavin Harrison

I'd like to show you some advanced polyrhythms that you can work on when you're away from the drumset. I often practice these exercises while I'm waiting for a plane or when I'm sitting on a bus and have a lot of spare time.

Example 1 consists of five-note groupings of 16th notes played over quarter notes and dotted 8th notes. Begin by singing the five-note pattern (top line) while tapping quarter notes on your leg (bottom line). Once you can do that, continue to the second bar, where you're singing fives and tapping dotted 8ths. Once you've mastered both measures individually, try playing them as a two-bar exercise.

1

Example 2 is a similar exercise, except that you're singing groups of seven 16th notes. Once you feel comfortable tapping out the quarter notes, move on to bar two. Then string the measures into a two-bar exercise.

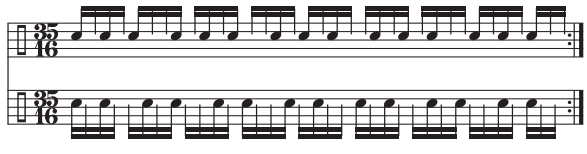
2

The previous two exercises dealt with the syncopations of five against four, five against three, seven against four, and seven against three. In Example 3, let's take it a step further and sing the five-note grouping while tapping groups of seven. In order to complete an entire bar, you have to sing seven groups of five while tapping five groups of seven.

3

Now let's reverse the pattern and sing groups of seven while tapping groups of five. Once you're comfortable with Examples 3 and 4, try putting them together as a two-bar exercise.

4



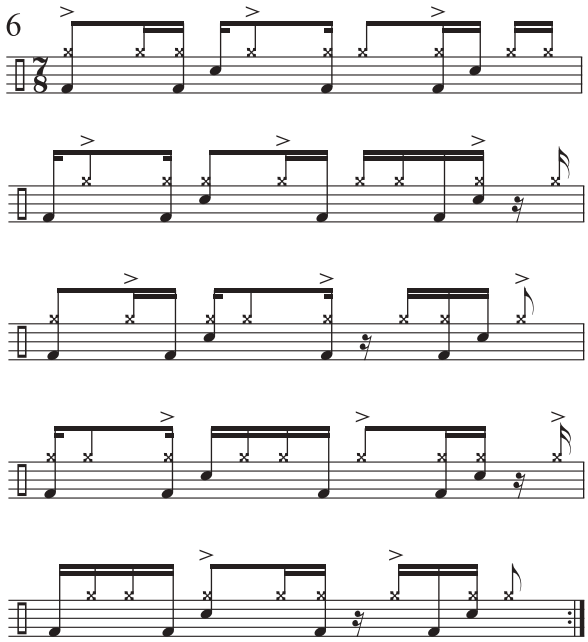
Now, I know what you're thinking: "What does all of this achieve besides giving me a big headache?" I like to think of these types of exercises as a workout for the brain. We spend thousands of hours working on our muscles, but often forget to work on what's inside our skulls. Ultimately, it's your brain that will produce ideas for you—not your bulging biceps.

You can also transfer these ideas over to the drumset. Example 5 is a simple rhythm in 5/8. Start out with 16th notes on the hi-hat. Then change to 8th notes, quarter notes, and finally dotted 8th notes.

5

Example 6 is a little more difficult. It's a 7/8 rhythm with a five-note grouping on the ride.

6



You can see me playing all these examples, and a whole lot more, on my new DVD, *Rhythmic Horizons*, which is available from my Web site, www.drumset.demon.co.uk.

•

you could play on your turntable, including one by Jeff Porcaro performing a song you include on *Rhythmic Illusions*....

Gavin: I got that from *Modern Drummer*! I remember hearing it and thinking, "This is unbelievable," because we never got to hear Jeff stretch out as Gadd did on "Mad Hatter." When I heard that flexi-disk, which I still own, I planned to play as Jeff Porcaro would have—or, at least, like a distant memory of him. For the DVD, I played the song to a keyboard player friend of mine, Gary Sanctuary, and he wrote it out.

I was reading on a forum that some kid could play a Jeff Porcaro beat. He said, "It's got zero difficulty." *Zero difficulty?* What he means is he can play foot-foot-snare, but he's never going to play it like Jeff. It's the easiest thing in the world, but the *hardest* thing in the world to make feel great.

I think that's what I got from my dad. He played me a record with Stan Levey on it and said, "Listen to this drummer. I really like the feel." I said, "He's just going ding-ding-a-ding; it's rubbish!" And my dad said, "Listen to the way it *feels*." So I would play along to the records and try and match the drummer's part.

People just don't listen. When I was young and doing sessions, the producer would say after a take, "How was that?" And I would say, "I dunno. I've got to listen to it." And the producer would say, "Weren't you listening to it while you were playing?" Shit *no* I wasn't! I couldn't tell if I'd done a good take until I'd listened in the control room. Now I can play a track and say to the producer, "Great. Let's move to the next song."

MD: How do you listen to the whole track when you're wrestling with a tough drum part?

Gavin: I just open my ears. Unbelievably, for the first few years, I just listened to myself and was preoccupied with the mechanics of the drums: checking my grip, my left foot, worrying about the hi-hat, with my head so far down in the engine room I couldn't hear where I was going.

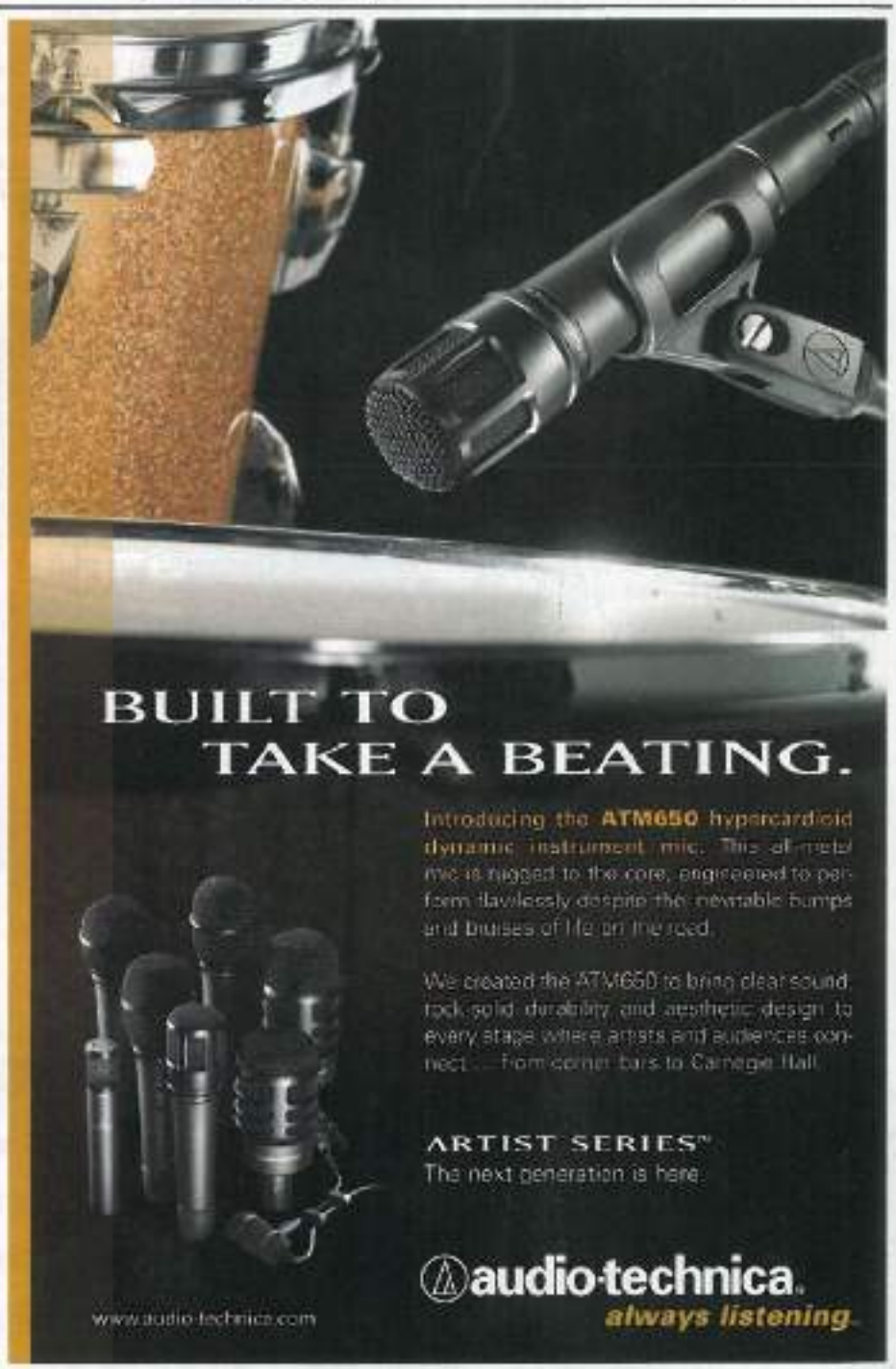
I think a lot of listening is being comfortable with your ability. Nowadays, I know that I can listen to everything else and that the drums won't fall apart. It's the ability to "stand behind" the drumkit and listen to yourself play as if you're another drummer. It took years to let go of the old way of thinking and come to the new way, where I could listen to the track and know I was going in the right direction emotionally. By the end of the recording, I wouldn't need to check back; I was listening *at the time*.

MD: Are there instances where you've thought a beat or two were off but you've let the track go anyway?

Gavin: Oh, yeah. More and more I worry less about things being perfect. In the '80s when drum machines came out, everything was anal. Producers would make me do a track over if they heard a flam with the click. Nowadays if everything feels good but the last two tom notes were a little late, I'm happy to leave it because that fill had a vibe to it.

Another thing: I don't want to read anymore. On a subtle level, I sound different when I'm reading a chart. In the last few years, I've tried to learn songs without looking at charts. I might take one look, just to see where we're going. But I'd rather learn the song and play it with my eyes closed.

The first time I hear the song, I want to sit back and see what I can bring to it in terms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of rhythmic shape and architecture. When I was young, I would go to a session and imagine what fills I could jam in at certain points. Today I want to hear the melody—the rhythm of the melody, the pace—and get a clue about where the lyrics are going.

MD: Songwriters claim that most drummers don't listen enough to the lyrics. How can drums augment lyrics and feel?

Gavin: There's plenty of emotional effects I can make on the drums, apart from 32nd-note ghost notes, which actually make the song feel nervous, especially if the song's about driving slowly through the country in an open-top car. I think about cymbals that might sound nice, rather than, "I've got some licks that would fit in this song." Or I could retune the bass drum, or use brushes. Or maybe I could just use the overheads and get this massive '60s sound. But if I start with a detailed chart, my head is in the sand.

MD: Do you find comfort in certain head tensions or in the touch of a certain cymbal, or can you play whatever's there: the *kit du jour?*

Gavin: Different drums and cymbals make me play differently. I've got a huge collection of hi-hat cymbals. Some hi-hats can make me play differently, even if I'm just playing 8ths. If you're playing Zildjian Mastersounds, for example, it gives a different feeling than if you're playing 12" Re-Mixes. The sound you're hearing makes you play differently. I love to sit down on other people's kits because I'll play something I've never played in my life.

I recently bought a '60s Rogers three-piece kit. I put them out in the ambient room at home, and they feel great. I couldn't possibly play that way on my other [Sonor] kit; it wouldn't feel right. It's like when you're playing swing, you need a certain feel and sound on your ride cymbal.

MD: Case in point: On your DVD version of "So What," you go to a certain ride cymbal that sounds perfect.

Gavin: That's my old Canadian K, and it's great—but I wouldn't want to play rock with it. It would be totally wrong. I'd go to my old A Zildjian, a cymbal I got off Joe Hodson before he died. He said he bought it in the late '40s and used it all his life. The funny thing is that it's a real good rock cymbal. If I play it with Porcupine Tree, it always cuts.

Picking the right cymbal for the track is as important as picking the right snare drum, which is as important as picking the right part. There are so many options. It helps if you've got a lot of ideas, which gets us back to the concept of rhythmic illusions.

With Porcupine Tree, I hardly ever play a metric modulation or a displacement, but I can manipulate *something*—maybe take a simple drum rhythm and turn parts of it around. I can easily do that without changing the hi-hat or snare drum. Subtly changing little details turns me on and gets me thinking of the architecture of the piece, and steers me away from my childhood ideas of how many fast notes I can jam into a song.

MD: In the song "Nineteen Days," your harmonic content is, I feel, Western, whereas your rhythmic resolution is not.

Gavin: [laughs] East meets West! With that piece I was trying to play little melodies with the toms. When you play them softly you can get a really nice sound out of them—not so much a true pitch, but more in the way you can think of the low and high content of a fill. I try to think in more abstract ways, such as first doing something with the toms and next something with bells and floor tom. It enables me to come up with new ideas, instead of just taking this big list of fills I've ripped off from Steve Gadd, Simon Phillips, or Vinnie Colaiuta. That was more about impressing people.

Reading Kenny Werner's *Effortless Mastery* had a big effect on me. It was about letting go of all that and not being afraid of not sounding good. I like to dare myself to make a mistake, because I know that I'm on the edge of discovering something. I'd rather hear a guy make a load of mistakes and play from his heart than hear the most perfect pre-rehearsed set of patterns—regurgitated circus tricks.

There seems to be two camps: guys who

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do amazing fills and suck at groove, and guys who play great groove but suck at fills. I guess my life's mission is trying to find a place between the two.

MD: I'm pulling a quote from your latest DVD: "I quite often get attracted to inanimate objects, just to find out what rhythms are hiding within them."

Gavin: You pick up some kitchen utensil and start tapping it, and something magical comes out. It's a David Lynch thing about "the eye of the duck," where if you took a picture of a duck with no eye, there's only *one* place you draw an eye that would look correct. [laughs] That's where I'm heading with the inanimate object thing. There's something about an object that makes me want to pull a rhythm out of it. I wonder if I were to go back and play the drums for the first time, what rhythms would I play, taking into account the shapes, the sounds, the smells?

It's funny, when I got my little Rogers kit, I took the heads off and the smell from the inside of the drum took me back to my first ever Ajax kit in the '60s, when I was eight years old.

MD: Recently I did some straight-ahead jazz gigs with a kit with the heads really tight. I came home to my other drums, which had looser heads, and they didn't feel right. It reminded me of your statement of certain rhythms residing in certain objects.

Gavin: When you've got the skins tight, you play different things because you *can*, such as double strokes on the floor tom. There's no way you can do that on a rock-tuned floor tom. The notes will be blurred.

I used to turn things around in my kit, put the tom over there, or play left-handed. I'd come up with rhythms that would be impossible to play in the original position. I'd realize, Hey, this is a great rhythm, but I *could* have played it with my kit set up regular. Why didn't I ever think of it?

MD: You've remarked that your thing is not chops. What is it, then?

Gavin: You don't really need any conventional chops to play my stuff, but you need a hell of a lot of gray matter to get through it. It's exercises for the mind—a way of exercising this big, fat muscle in my head. I remember doing a gig in Switzerland for six weeks in a café bar. The only place I could practice was outdoors with a pad beside this fountain, because no one would complain about the sound of my sticks since the fountain was so loud. I'd sit out there from midnight to three in the morning doing paradiddles and doubles, but my brain was dead, dormant. I mean, I could practice *those* chops watching the television news. That's not what I want to be doing.

MD: So what's the prescription for brain-numbed drummers?

Gavin: The prescription is stop practicing chops and start opening up your ears. I'm amazed at the number of professional musicians I've worked with who aren't really listening. They're listening to what *they* do, but they're not listening to the music.

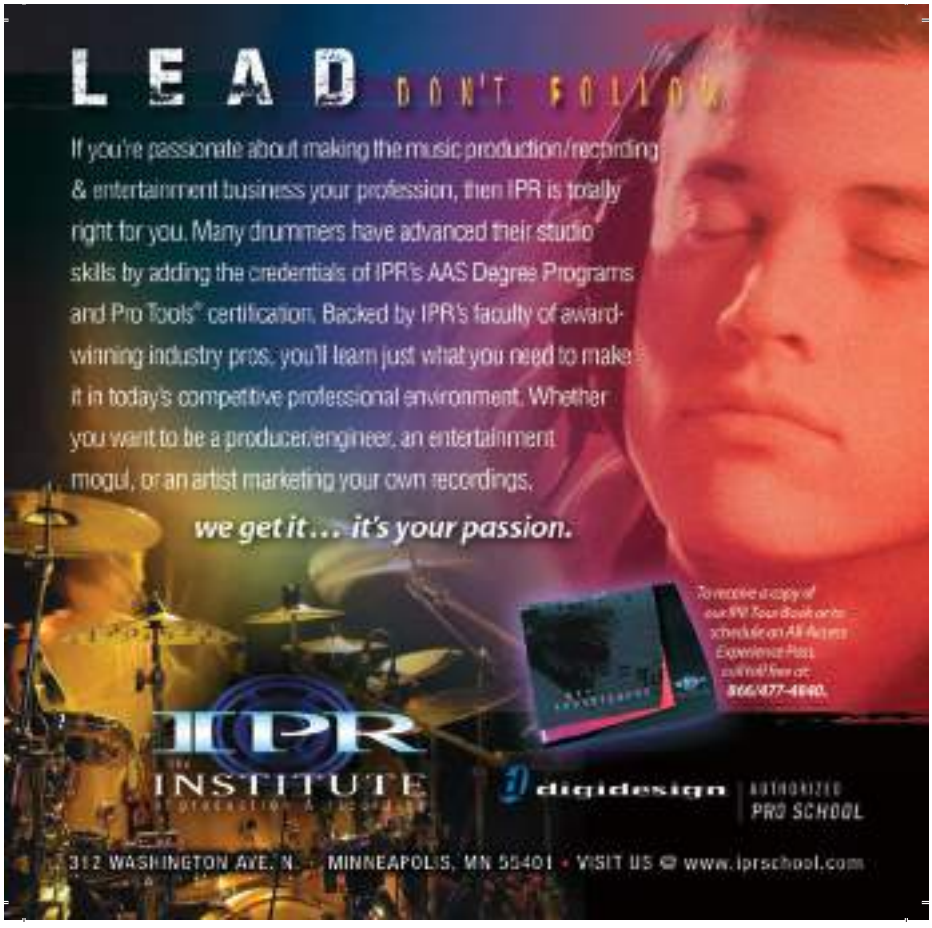
MD: In order to get through the first three exercises on side A of your DVD [the DVD is double-sided], you've really got to listen, or you're lost. If you were to start off the readers with any of your products, where would you put them?

Gavin: *Rhythmic Illusions* is where it starts. It's not a good idea to buy *Rhythmic Perspectives* without having looked at *Rhythmic Illusions*, because one is built on the other. *Rhythmic Visions* is more a visual interpretation of *Rhythmic Illusions*.

One of the reasons I did these projects was to document everything in my head: back it up on a hard drive, so to speak. If I ever need to go back to it, it's all documented. I never did it thinking it would be a good seller. The number of hours I've put into these books and DVDs, I'd be getting less than one cent an hour. It's almost a hobby.

MD: Do you have any favorite Porcupine Tree albums?

Gavin: I should mention the last two, which are very good, and the new one, which will include more drum-driven stuff. When I come up with drum patterns for Porcupine Tree, I'll play them for Steve Wilson [PT founder] and he'll write things around them. This time around, we're playing all of our new material live before recording it, which is fascinating because you find better ways to play them. The other way, you record and you go out and play and find that you're playing so much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Gavin Harrison

better in six months; you find different "solutions" to these problems.

MD: Was it a marriage made in heaven when you joined the band?

Gavin: I knew them for years. Then one day they told me their drummer had left and asked me if I could come out and record with them. They said, "You're a good all-rounder; could you come out and do the album as a session musician?" I did the album in about five days under typical session pressure—onlookers in the control room and record label reps. They did give me backing tracks on tape, and I did have time to listen to them, but only a couple of days. It went really well and they asked me to join the band.

MD: Has there been a problem with the notion of rhythmic illusions traveling into the sometimes high-volume stadium settings frequented by Porcupine Tree?

Gavin: The beauty of rhythmic illusions is that it's a concept rather than a physical technique. It can easily be applied to any kind of musical situation regardless of the volume. In fact, it lends itself very well to death metal.

MD: So Porcupine Tree provides a good outlet for rhythmic illusions?

Gavin: It's become that. I suppose it's my influence. I'm trying to push the parameters of what's possible in a rock band. Steve and I have a game plan as to what's possible in terms of rhythms. Most of the time, the audience has no idea about time signatures. They just want to enjoy the music and don't want to be lost in this private club, where, if you don't know what time signature it is, you're not allowed in. It's not a snobby kind of thing. We try to make even the oddest of time signatures enjoyable to people who don't know what they are. There has to be musical merit to them.

For more on Gavin, visit his Web site, www.drumset.demon.co.uk.

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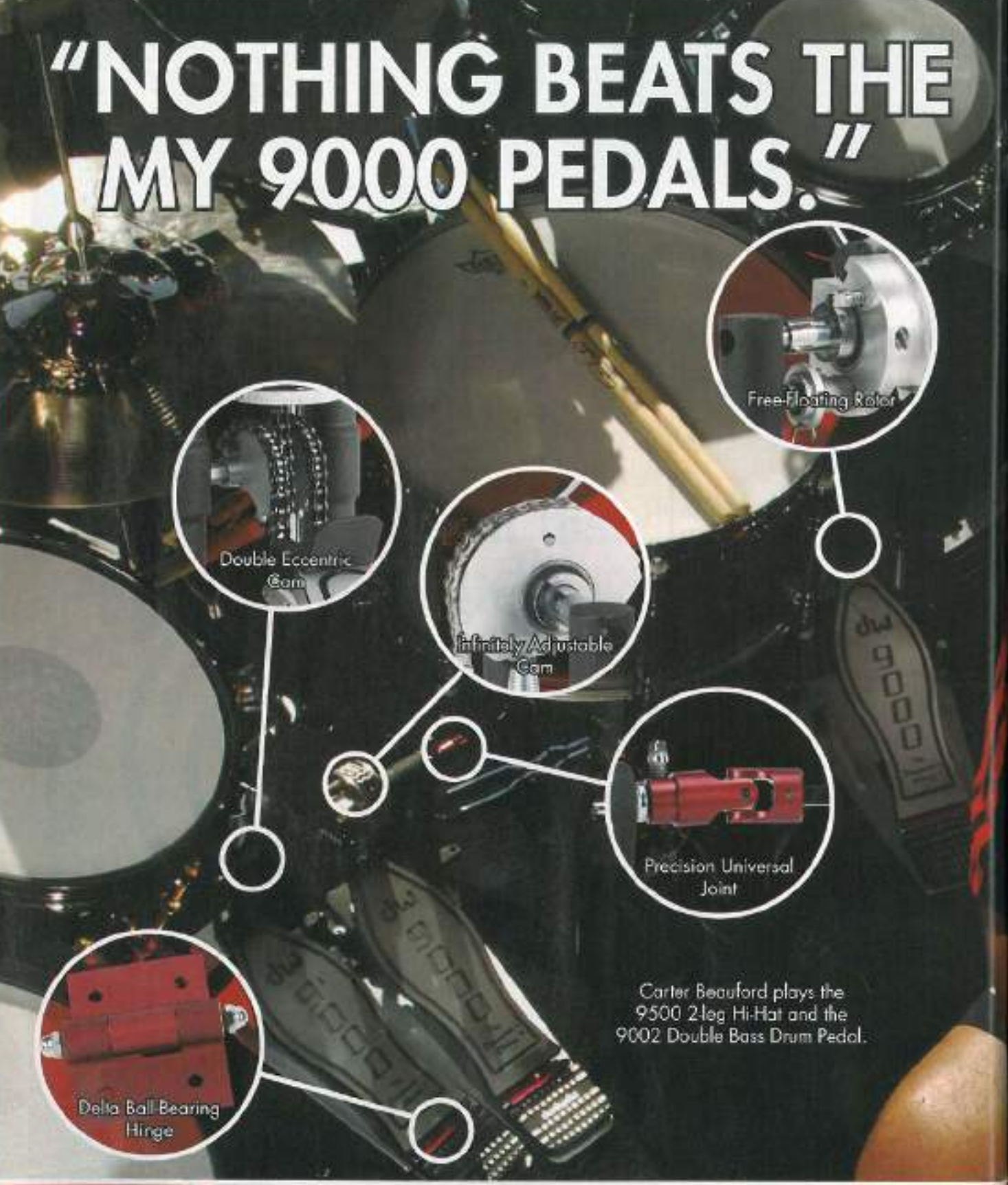

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9500 2-leg Hi-Hat and the
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Carter Beauford is the pulse of the Dave Matthews Band.

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HOT Cou

The Drummers Of Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, And The Dixie Chicks

Kenny Chesney was the top grossing country artist in 2005, followed by Toby Keith. The Dixie Chicks didn't tour in '05, but have had a big year in '06. (FYI, they held the number-one position in 2000 and were named *Pollstar* number-eight tour of 2003.) The level of success that these artists have attained is undeniable, and when they hit the road they need the best bands—and best drummers—possible.

In country music, touring is the ticket for most drummers, since recordings are usually done by session players. But when it comes time to sell those records, an artist's touring band is responsible for carrying the music to the audience—and in the case of these artists, *huge* audiences.

Kenny Chesney's Sean Paddock, Toby Keith's Dave McAfee, and The Dixie Chicks' Fred Eltringham have gone down very different paths leading to their current employment. Paddock landed his big gig fresh out of the gate. McAfee is a country veteran who has played with several recording artists. And Eltringham had never played country music before joining up with The Dixie Chicks. Each drummer has a very different story to tell, yet the bottom line is that each has been chosen to drive an ultra-successful musical act.

Hot country, indeed!

by Robyn Flans

Rick Malkin

intro!

Dave McAfee

Sean Paddock

Fred Eltringham

Kenny Chesney's

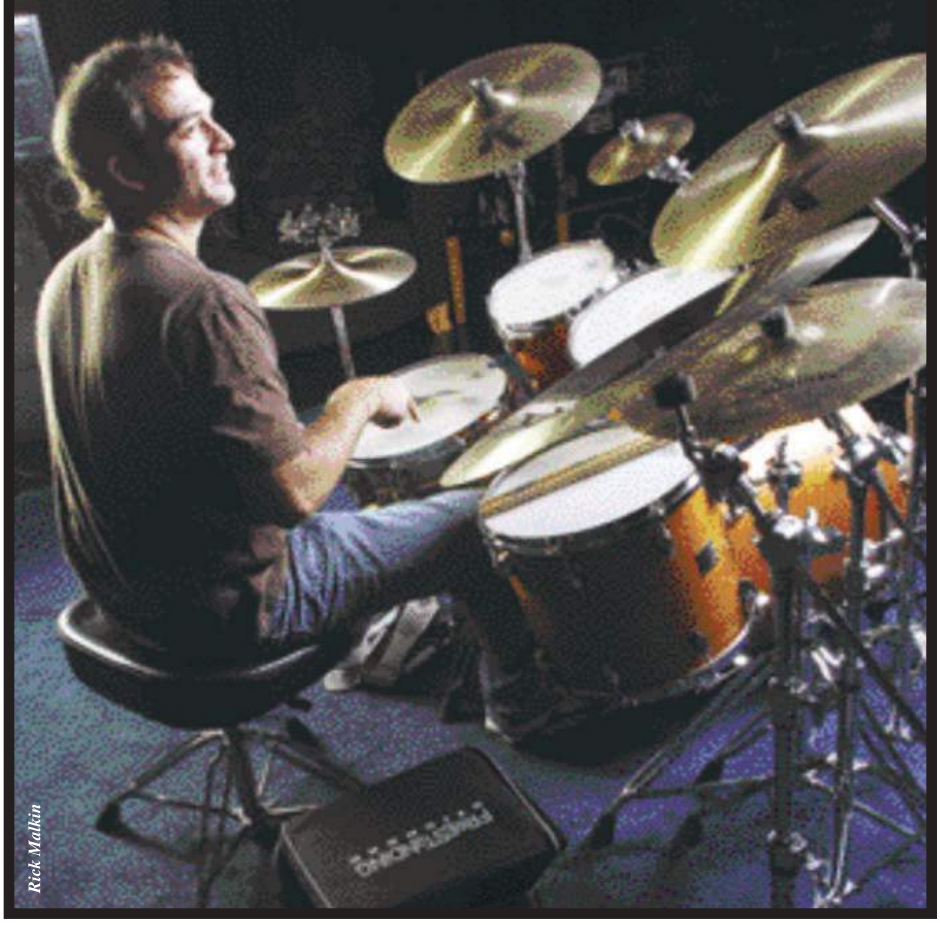
Sean Paddock

At The Top Of His Game

Sean Paddock grew up in a musical family: His mom loved country music, and his dad was more into rock and R&B. He got his first drumkit at age four, and recalls that playing came very naturally to him. Eventually he began playing along with records, cutting his teeth on The Beatles' *Abbey Road*. At nine, Sean began taking private lessons, where he learned how to read. He soon was recruited for the school band early, due to his advanced ability.

Fast-forward to 1996. Paddock joins Kenny Chesney's band, starting with the artist prior to his great success. Speaking of success, it doesn't get any bigger for a country artist: Chesney was named Entertainer Of The Year in 2004 and 2005 by the Academy Of Country Music. Obviously Chesney places a huge emphasis on his live show, and *that* places a big responsibility on his touring band. Today Paddock says he's proud to be a part of a unit that has the right to boast greatness.

"If you're playing honestly, playing for the song, and you're there as a supporting player, you're doing your job."



Rick Malkin

MD: What got you started on drums?
Sean: My dad was a bass player, my mom was a singer, and they were always playing in bands. They were playing R&B, country, and rock. In fact, my dad's still playing.
MD: At what point did you start to think this was something you wanted to do with your life?
Sean: I knew all along that I wanted to do this.
MD: What happened after high school?
Sean: I started gigging at around fourteen, and when I was eighteen I was working with local bands.
MD: Who are some of your drumming idols?
Sean: Jeff Porcaro, Steve Gadd, Carlos Vega, Jim Keltner, Zigaboo Modeliste, and Alan White. Jeff Porcaro turned my head around when I was a kid. "Rosanna" came out and I went, "What is *this*?" *Toto IV* is one of my favorite records.
MD: How did you land your first major gig?
Sean: I was playing with an act in Arizona called The Herndon Brothers. I learned a lot from them. But after a while I felt that I needed to do something beyond the local scene. I began to feel that I was young and had to try my hand so I wouldn't regret it later.

I went to Nashville for a week's vacation during the summer. I hung out, met some people, and heard about Kenny's gig. I called the bandleader, set up an audition, and a week or two later I was back in Nashville auditioning. Plus, I knew the steel player in the band. He had played in a band with my dad.
MD: That was your first big gig, though at the time Kenny wasn't a big star.
Sean: No. We were rolling down the road with one bus and a trailer for the band gear.

Kenny was working his third record.

MD: Going back to your audition for a second, why do you think he picked you?

Sean: I came prepared. I studied Kenny's music. I listened to it as much as I could. I asked the guy in the band which songs would be important to know and I nailed all of them. I wanted this gig. After I played, they asked me when I could start. So it happened while I was on vacation, and as I like to say, I've been on vacation ever since.

MD: You were playing clubs ten years ago, and now you're playing arenas. What goes into being at the top of your game as a drummer for Kenny Chesney?

Sean: Playing from your heart is the first thing. If you're playing honestly, playing for the song, and you're there as a supporting player, you're doing your job.

MD: Do you work with a click?

Sean: Yes, on just about every song. There are only two or three where we don't use one.

MD: Where did you learn to play with a click track?

Sean: On the job. At first it was something I had to get used to, but it wasn't too hard. Initially, I was the only one in the band on the click. Then when I became bandleader, I insisted that everybody be on the click.

MD: When did you become bandleader?

Sean: Seven years ago.

MD: What are your responsibilities in that role?

Sean: I have to gather the bandmembers when we all need to be in one place. I set the times, make the phone calls regarding where to be and when—the logistics. Then there's also the situation where Kenny will come to me and say, "We need to learn this song," so I need to tell everybody to start listening to it.

Then there's the music director part of it. If we're in rehearsals, I make sure the arrangements sound good and that everything is tight. I'm also the mediator, so if someone has an idea—which I encourage—I take the idea to Kenny if I think it's a good one.

MD: What are your favorite Chesney songs to play?

Sean: I like "Anything But Mine," because it has a lot of emotion and a cool melody. The music is what first attracts me to a song. I also like "Who You'd Be Today," another ballad. We have a cool arrange-

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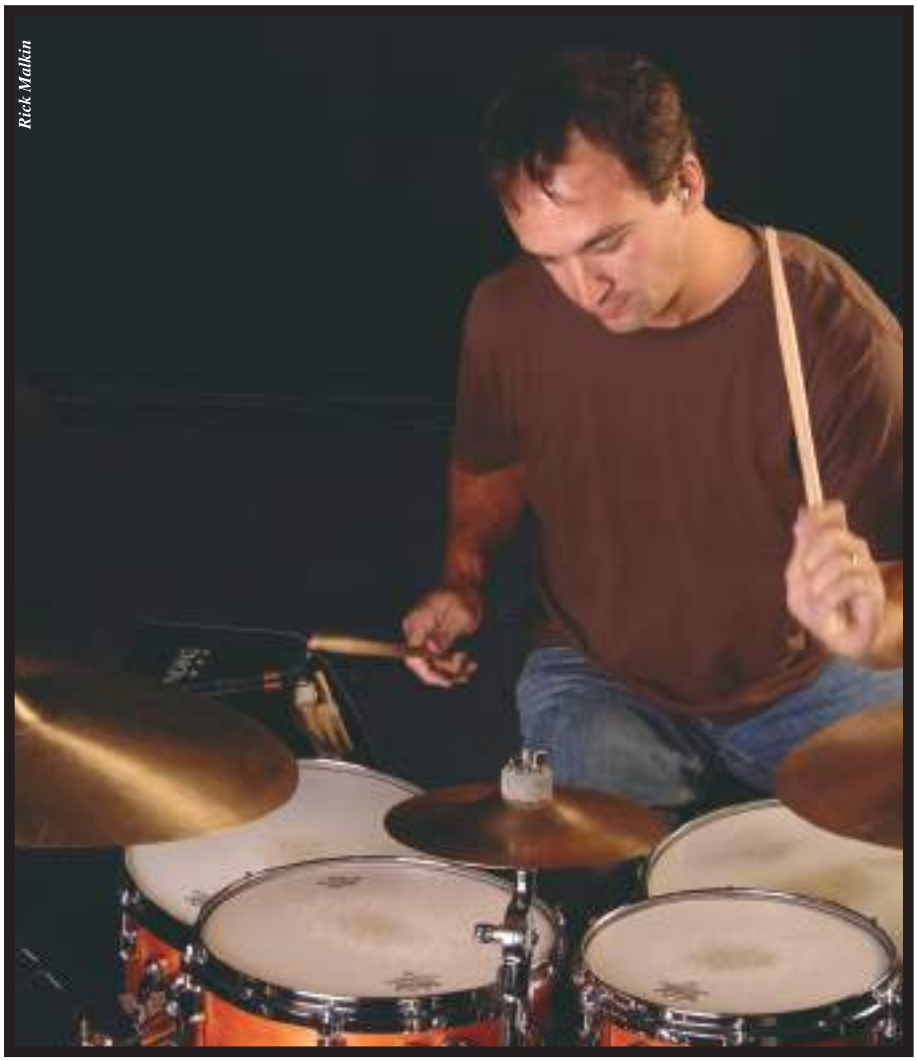
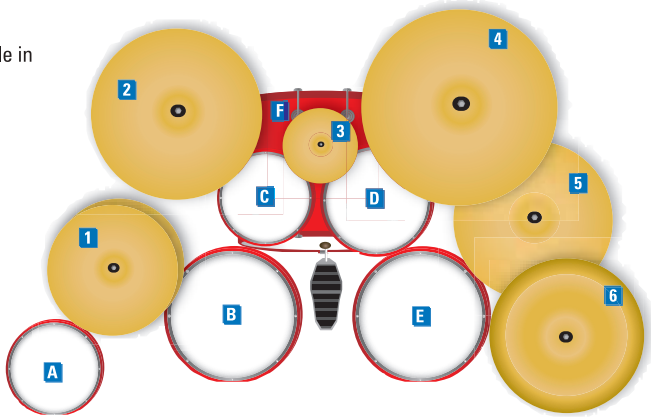

Rick Malkin

Sean's Kit

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Maple in vintage (natural) finish
A. 4x10 snare
B. 5½x14 brass snare
C. 8x10 tom
D. 9x12 tom
E. 12x14 tom
F. 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" New Beat hi-hats
2. 18" K Custom Dark crash
3. 8" K Custom Dark splash
4. 20" K ride
5. 17" A Custom crash
6. 18" A swish



Hardware: Yamaha

Sticks: Zildjian Vinnie Colaiuta model (hickory with wood tip)

Electronics: MPC 2000XL

Microphones: Audio-Technica

Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on snare batters (Moon Gel half for muffling), Ambassador snare-side, coated Ambassadors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath (no muffling, medium to loose batter, slightly tighter bottom), coated PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony PowerStroke 3 on front (loose tuning with blanket inside)

Toby Keith's

Dave McAfee

Country Veteran

Over the course of his career, Dave McAfee has worked with many top country acts, such as Bryan White, Wade Hayes, and now Toby Keith. Keith is a three-time American Music Award winner and the holder of five Billboard Music Awards. He continuously receives songwriting accolades, and has taken home countless BMI awards, numerous video awards, and several nods from the Academy Of Country Music, including being named Entertainer Of The Year twice. There's no doubt that what Keith needs from a drummer is power, control, and relentless excitement.

McAfee is definitely that drummer. He's been enthralled by the drums since he was about six years old, encouraged by his cousin, Joan Wenzel, who was a drummer. In fact, Wenzel helped hook him up with his first teacher, Dave Ulrich, who taught the youngster how to read.

> "One thing that's really important for a musician to understand is networking. I probably know two or three guys from every band working in country music today."

McAfee inherited his siblings' records, recalling that the first one to captivate him was *Chicago VII*. "After listening to Danny Seraphine, I could sit down and play along, but I couldn't get the feet right," he laughs. And his father's taste in country music influenced him: "I figured out who [country session great] Larrie Londin was pretty early," McAfee recalls. "And through my brother and sister, I got into Toto. I was drawn to Jeff Porcaro. Larrie and Jeff were two big influences in my life."

McAfee played in high school bands, and says that his teacher at the time, Jim Billingsley, played a pivotal role in his development. "He was one of those guys who gravitated towards individual students," McAfee recalls. "I can't count the number of times he came by, put his arm around me, and said, 'You know, you could really have a shot at this.' He told me I had a great sense of time and meter."

McAfee got one of his cousin Joan's hand-me-down drumsets and continued on through the school music programs, attending Ohio University. When he took a break from school to visit his dad in Oklahoma, McAfee saw an ad in the paper for a country bar band that needed a drummer. They offered him the job, at $250 a week, which he thought was great.

The drummer ended up playing another club on weekends, The Rusty Spur, in Marlow, Oklahoma. It was at that point that Mason Dixon, a band signed to Capital Records, came through town. Their drummer was going back to college, and after McAfee's band opened for Mason Dixon, they offered him the job. McAfee packed his bags and hopped on the bus, and he's been playing with major artists ever since.

McAfee remained with Mason Dixon for nearly three years, during which he lived in Texas. He then moved to Nashville in late 1993 to join Pearl River. At that time, fledgling artist Bryan White worked as Pearl River's T-shirt salesman, but as he began to move into the spotlight, the band would play for him. Bryan's career took off, Pearl River fizzled, and McAfee became White's drummer.

In mid-'96, McAfee got an offer to work with Wade Hayes, who was riding a wave of success. Hayes challenged the band

every night by calling off different traditional covers without warning. It was a close-knit group. When Hayes took a hiatus and McAfee got the call from the Toby Keith camp, it was a tough decision for the drummer to change jobs, but in time it was clear he made the right choice….

Dave: When I got the call, it was perfect timing for me. But I was more worried about leaving Wade than anything else. Toby's "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" had just been released, and then "How Would You Know" came out and unleashed an incredible string of number-ones. It was unbelievable. I'm always here to say how lucky I was to get the call right then.

MD: How did you get that call?

Dave: One thing that's really important for a musician to understand is networking. I know a lot of musicians who sit in the dressing room, go out and play, and then go right back to the dressing room. I was never that guy. I wanted to hear everybody play and meet everybody, and after so many years of doing that I probably know two or three guys from every band working in country music today.

I knew at least three guys in Toby's band, and I'd met Toby probably ten times over the years. I'd even sat in with him. When their old drummer left to join Ricochet, they thought of me. This was at a point when Toby's career was just doing okay and he was playing three hundred dates a year.

MD: What did you think of that schedule? There's a different thing that goes on when you're working with a superstar as opposed to when you're with a band, slugging it out. When somebody says you have to be at the top of your game, what does that mean?

Dave: The first thing that comes to mind is the obvious: When you're playing clubs, bars, and maybe 5,000-seat rooms, the directive is always the same: "Let's get in here and leave a mark." Toby's favorite way of doing that is to never let the crowd sit. In the early days, he didn't even want a set list because he didn't want the show to be sterile. We had baseball signals for every song. Toby would tell Chuck, his bandleader, and Chuck would give us the sign. It might be him patting his chest, pointing to his leg, or making a hand gesture to the ceiling. We played like that until Toby got his own tour and it became millions of dol-

continued on page 116

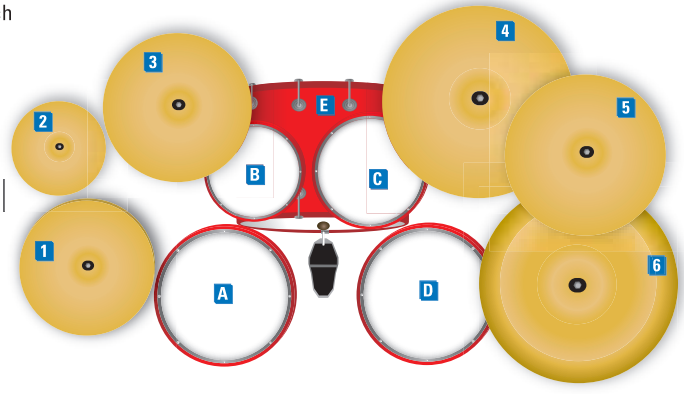
Dave's Setup

Drums: Yamaha Absolute Birch Nouveau in honey yellow finish

A. 5½x14 birch snare
B. 9x10 tom
C. 10x12 tom
D. 12x14 tom
E. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste Signature

1. 14" medium hi-hats
2. 10" splash
3. 17" Full crash
4. 20" Dry Signature ride
5. 18" Full crash
6. 18" Heavy China



Hardware: Yamaha, including a DFP 9310 pedal and an RS 1000 rack system

Heads: Aquarian Texture Coated Response II on snare batter, Thin snare-side (medium-tight snare-side, tight batter, looser snare wires, a little tape to muffle batter), clear Response IIs on tops of toms with Classic Clears underneath (tighter bottoms, looser tops), Super-Kick II on bass drum batter with Super-Kick on front (front fairly tight, batter loose, small pillow inside for muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth 5B Signature model (hickory with nylon tip)

Electronics: Alesis SR-16 (for click)

Microphones: Shure SM57 (snare, hat), SM91 close to inside bass drum batter, Beta 52 at hole, Yamaha Sub-Kick mounted inside drum, Beta 56a (toms, ride, talkback), KSM-27 (overheads), one pair of 21" Turbo subwoofers under riser, Aura 50-Watt Seat Thumpers

The Dixie Chicks'

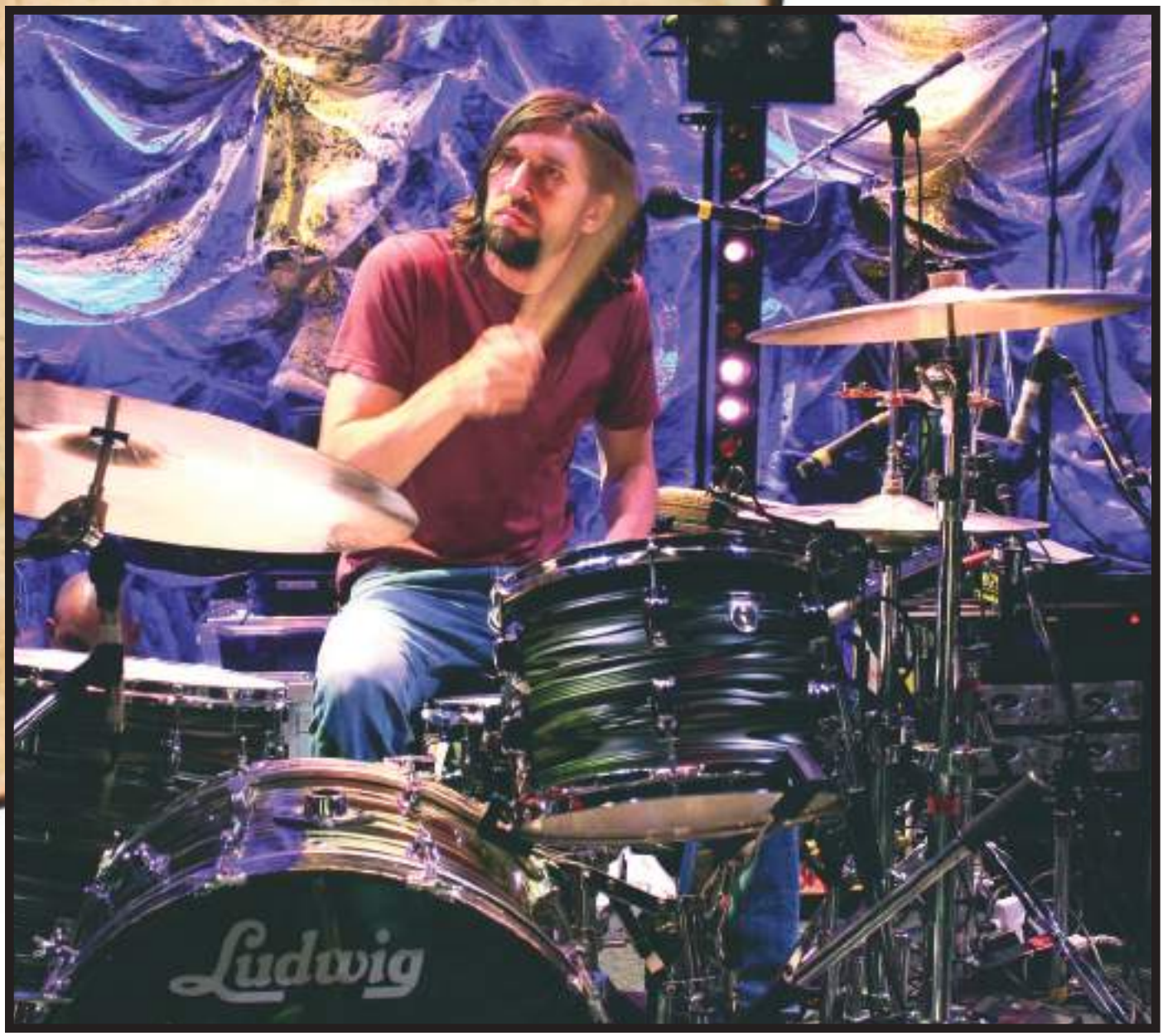
Fred Eltringham

Bringing The Rock

Fred Eltringham grew up in Westchester, Pennsylvania, and began playing drums at an early age, after his mother asked him and his four older siblings if they would like to play an instrument and take lessons. He was seven when all five started lessons at Beam's Music and formed a band together called Rox, playing Jimi Hendrix, Pink Floyd, and Eric Clapton covers. They performed at Beam's as well as at local schools and at the mall. They enjoyed their biggest show, when Fred was nine, at the Special Olympics—on the back of a flatbed truck.

While growing up, Eltringham studied with his teacher, Bob Quigley, for eight years, all the while playing in bands. Though he didn't participate much in school bands, when he was nineteen Eltringham decided to attend Berklee's five-week summer program. He returned with a scholarship to attend Berklee full time, but soon felt under-prepared and overwhelmed, leaving the school after his first semester to attend to some family matters and "get my stuff together."

Fred went home, practiced a lot, and listened to "tons of music." In 1995, he joined RCA recording band The Gigolo Aunts, recording one record with them called *Minor Chords And Major Themes*



"The songs are so good that they almost play themselves. The only challenge is keeping it fresh every night."

and an EP called *Learn To Play Guitar*. Gigs with Juliana Hatfield and Ben Kweller followed, until 2004, when Eltringham joined The Wallflowers, prompting a permanent move to Los Angeles.

Currently, Eltringham is playing for The Dixie Chicks, the eight-time Grammy Award winners and ten-time Country Music Award winners, including 2000's Entertainer of the Year Award.

MD: Before we talk about your gig with The Dixie Chicks, what's the current status of The Wallflowers?

Fred: We're on hiatus right now. We made a record called *Rebel Sweetheart*, which came out in 2004, but nothing much happened, so we toured for a while and then took a break.

I put the word out that I was looking for work, and [Prince/Soul Asylum drummer] Michael Bland told me that he had been asked to do the Dixie Chicks gig, but had decided not to do it. He gave me the tour manager's email address, so I dropped him an email introducing myself. I then sent a package—including records and DVDs I'd done, and the bandleader called. But what really got me the gig was my friend Gary Louris, who wrote some songs on the Dixie Chicks record. He called them and put in a good word.

After that I talked to the girls for about an hour while they were in the studio, and then, two days later, they offered me the gig. They'd never really heard any of my tapes, but went on word of mouth and our meeting. That was in January of 2006.

MD: What did The Wallflowers need from you as a player?

Fred: I think it was another thing where they were familiar with me and it was a personality thing. They needed someone who was just a good rock 'n' roll drummer and who could bring his own personality to it—someone who wasn't just going to come in and play the parts off the records. And they wanted a drummer with some creativity, who could inspire them a little bit and try different stuff.

MD: They're not married to the parts on their records?

Fred: No, not really. They want the basic feel and everything, but they like to change things up a little bit.

MD: What is your role with The Dixie Chicks? How does that compare to The Wallflowers, and what do you bring to the table?

Fred: It's kind of the same thing. They want someone who isn't going to come in and play exactly what's on the record. They want to do something different every night. The Chicks' new record, which they did with [producer] Rick Rubin, is a little more rock 'n' roll than country, and that's what I am. I bring the rock.

MD: What do you like about playing with them?

Fred: I love playing the new stuff. I enjoy some of the older stuff, too, some of the upbeat tunes, like "Sin Wagon." And there's one called "Some Days You Gotta Dance" that's fun to play, with that classic country train beat.

MD: Is there anything you had to woodshed that you weren't used to playing before?

Fred: The train beat, for sure. I played along to the records, over and over again. It's really fun to play. All that stuff is kind of rock 'n' roll anyway. They do have a couple of shuffles in the set too.

MD: How long did you have from the time you got the gig to rehearsals?

Fred: About a month. I got all their records and played along to everything. Finally they sent me a list of all the songs we were going to be learning, but by then I knew all of them anyway.

MD: When you get a list like that, do you write notes, tempos, etc.? What's the process?

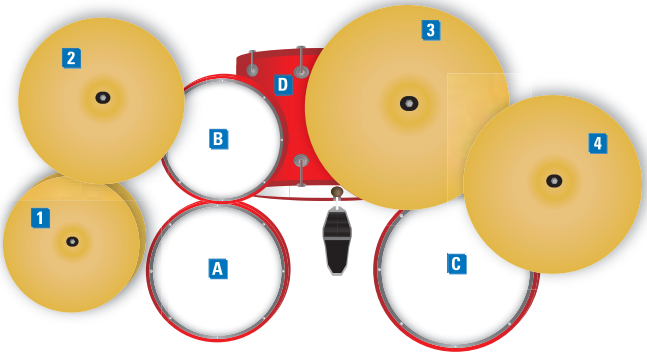
Fred: I write out the forms—intro, verse, chorus, bridge, chorus, etc.—the tempos, along with little notes here and there, like if there are signature fills or

continued on page 117

Fred's Kit

Drums: Ludwig Standard in Avocado Strata finish
- **A.** 5x14 Black Beauty snare
- **B.** 10x13 tom
- **C.** 16x16 floor tom
- **D.** 16x22 kick

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 14" Paragon hi-hats
2. 17" AAX medium crash
3. 20" AA medium ride
4. 18" AAX medium crash



Hardware: Ludwig stands, DW 5000 bass drum pedal (felt side of beater, medium spring tension)

Heads: Remo Emperor X on snare batter, Ambassador snare-side (snare-side tuned higher, Moon Gel for muffling), coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors underneath (Moon Gel for muffling), clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony Ambassador on front (loose tuning, small pillow for muffling)

Sticks: Vater Power House model (hickory with wood tip)

Electronics: Alesis SR-16 (for click)

Microphones: Shure SM57 (snare), SM98s (toms), SM91 (inside kick)

ment for that one. And I like "Beer In Mexico" and "Keg In The Closet," because they're fun.

MD: Can you alter the drum parts on stage?

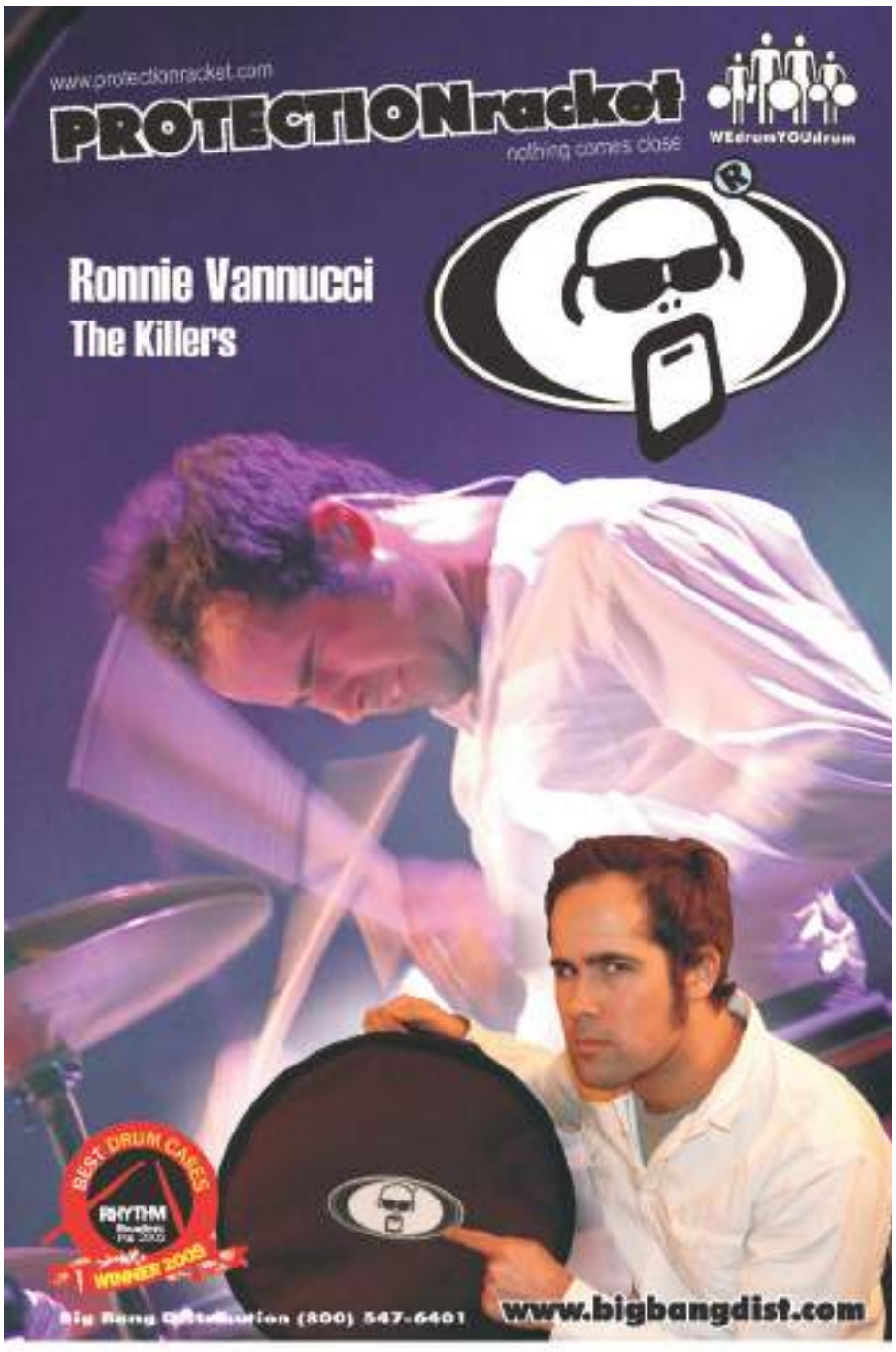
Sean: I play stuff a little bit differently from the records. I'll listen to the original and pretend it's a demo. I put my own stamp on it. It's hard to exactly copy another drummer. Of course, I play the signature licks that people are familiar with, but I think it still sounds like me.

MD: Has Kenny talked about recording with the band?

Sean: We just came out with a live record, which is our first album as a band. It's called *Kenny Chesney Live—Live Those Songs Again*.

MD: What's the biggest challenge of this gig for you?

Sean: Probably learning how to deal with all of the different personalities in the band. It's not the music, because that comes naturally. It's the logistics and personalities. I need to improve my office chops. And I'm always trying to improve my playing and take the next step as a drummer.



MD: How do you do that?

Sean: I try to be a better listener. Also, the more I relax, the better I play.

MD: Do you warm up?

Sean: Yes. I warm up for twenty to thirty minutes before every show. I try to get a good rebound off the drum pad and be as loose as possible. I might do some singles, doubles, and those good ol' paradiddles.

MD: Once you started playing arenas, did anything have to change in your approach or equipment?

Sean: With the gear, I integrated a sampler for some drum loops. I had to step that up a little bit for "Live Those Songs," which I programmed myself. There's a little loop on the record, but instead of using the original, I decided to do it in my house on my MPC2000XL. There's another little percussion loop I do at the top of "No Shoes, No Shirts, No Problems."

The other thing about playing big arenas is that the audiences are so loud that it makes it difficult to hear. On the last tour, the top of the show was definitely a challenge as far as the crowd noise. Kenny made his entrance from the front of house. We would kick off "Summertime" for four bars before he started singing the first verse. No one had any idea what was going on because the musicians on stage were covered by a huge screen. They snuck Kenny out by the mixing console where there was a little stage and a lift that raised him up. When the chorus kicked in, he would rise up in the middle of the arena and be in full view of everybody.

The challenge there was the timing. They had to crank up the click in his mix, and the monitor engineer designed this light that blinked every time the click came on, so you could watch it and listen to the click at the same time. We needed it because the crowd got so loud. You've got to be on your toes on this gig, even though it seems like a party atmosphere.

MD: You really seem to love this gig.

Sean: Musically, it's always evolving, which makes it creative and enjoyable. We've all worked really hard to make it happen. I've been in this band a long time, and we've worked our way up the ladder. Looking back, it's really cool that we've struggled and succeeded together. We went from dingy clubs to stadiums. Sometimes the greatest time is the ride—the struggles you go through together and the stories you can tell. •

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lars in sets and video synchronization and such. With productions like that, you can't fly by the seat of your pants.

Even though it's a much, much bigger show today, we have the same directive. We've got to thump 'em. A lot of our songs are purposely faster live. Toby will go with a lot of different instrumentations, too. With "Crash Here Tonight," on the record and radio the full band doesn't come in until the chorus. The first half of the verse is piano and the next half is all steel underneath Toby's vocal. But live, that doesn't work, so the band comes in earlier. One thing he always says is, "If they want to hear the CD, they can sit at home and listen to the stereo."

Toby likes his concerts to be more like a rock show, so there is all kinds of lighting. When they go to black between songs, it's *really* black. It gives glow tape a new meaning, and you have to be on the ball. You have to have your settings ready for the next two tunes.

MD: What do you enjoy about this gig?

Dave: Toby is a great guy. He has the attitude that, if you want to talk, he's there for you. My other favorite thing is that we play to huge crowds—20,000, 30,000 people.

Another great thing about Toby is that he's not moody. Lots of times when you get busy and sleep-deprived, your main focus as a sideman is, What mood is the boss in today? Not having to deal with that is the best. Toby always has a new joke to tell, he's always grinning, and that takes such a load off the band. The band can play with confidence. We know he's not going to whirl on you and go, "What was *that*?"

MD: Playing for such large audiences, do you have to approach your instrument differently?

Dave: Yes, I do. Warming up is important to me. I isolate myself for an hour before the gig to get the synapses firing in my brain. It's not just the drum-to-drum facility thing. It's having my head together, gauging the artist right off the top. Sometimes he might want to run down the track like a steamroller, and other nights it's a little more saucy or relaxed. Toby knows the minute he sees the crowd. To be ready to read him like that, I can't be watching television before the gig, jumping off the bus and heading up to the stage nonchalantly.

Our show starts at 9:00, and I have my golden hour before that, when nobody talks to me and I don't talk to anybody else. I warm up with a practice pad and run through the set list in my mind—the stopping points, the click points, where video syncs occur, where pyro goes off…those sorts of things. I do all of that so that when I'm walking to the stage my head is clear.

MD: Anything else you'd like to add?

Dave: Actually, yes. I want to mention that Scotty Hawkins, the drummer for Joe Nichols, recently filled in for me so that I could fly home for the birth of my daughter. He had show tapes for about a week, since it was our plan to use him if there were any complications with my wife around her due date.

Scotty did a great job, and, incredibly, he wouldn't accept any compensation for the gig. He said, "If you or Toby pay me anything, I'm just going to hand it back to you for your daughter's college fund. This is a brotherhood out here, and you have to be there for the birth of your daughter." So many people talk about negative road stories, but it's nice to be able to pass along something so positive. •

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Devil's Got A New Disguise,
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Greatest-Hits CD Collection!

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To enter go to www.moderndrummer.com.

Click on the Contests link, and then on the image of the CD cover.
Complete the required information, and you could be the winner of this *incredible* prize!

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little breaks or stops.

MD: You really have to be at the top of your game when playing for an act like The Dixie Chicks. What do you think prepared you along the way? You didn't have a lot of formal lessons.

Fred: Playing in front of people from a young age helped. But also, playing along with records growing up helped me develop a good sense of feel and time. The very first record I bought was *Led Zeppelin I*. I played along with it for hours and hours in my room, getting schooled every day. That record still schools me. And Hendrix's "Hey Joe" was the first song I ever learned. Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Ringo Starr, and Charlie Watts were my idols. I also really liked Alex Van Halen. They all were incredible, pure rock 'n' roll drummers who had imagination.

As I got older, I discovered guys like Stan Lynch from The Heartbreakers and Pete Thomas from Elvis Costello's band. Those guys really know how to play a song and add their own thing to it.

MD: Do you use electronics on the Chicks gig?

Fred: No, it's very basic. I play a four-piece Ludwig kit and that's it. There's Pro Tools out on the tour, so the whole show is played to a click.

MD: When did you learn how to play with a click?

Fred: In the studio. When I was living in Boston, I was with a band called Atlas Shrugged, and we recorded constantly. That's where I really cut my teeth in the studio.

MD: What was your first major recording?

Fred: Tracy Bonham's *The Burdens Of Being Upright*. I got to do that session because one of my childhood friends, Drew Parsons, was playing bass with Tracy.

MD: What's the biggest challenge about a Chicks show for you?

Fred: It's really fun and pretty easy. The songs are so good that they almost play themselves. The only challenge is keeping it fresh every night.

MD: How do you do that?

Fred: By just playing different fills and by trying to play off each other a little more, trying to get inspired every night. The audience helps, too.

MD: Are you recording at all with them?

Fred: I recently recorded a song with them for their documentary, *Shut Up And Sing*. And we're just about to go into the studio to record some more.

MD: Any other recording going on?

Fred: Last year I recorded the Tears For Fears record *Everybody Loves A Happy Ending*. I've been recording some stuff with Jakob [Dylan], who has been writing music for the show *Six Degrees*. We recorded the title track, "Here Comes Now," and we're doing other music for the show. I also just did a record with a country artist named Keith Gattis and a new band that has just signed to Starbucks that is kind of country rock.

MD: Finally, is it tough being on tour now that you have two young kids?

Fred: It really is, but we have eyesight cameras for our computers, which helps. It still doesn't make up for not being able to kiss them goodnight, though.

DOUBLE DRUMMING'S 25 GREATEST HITS

Courtesy Of Discipline Global Mobile

by Adam Budofsky

Two drummers working it out, face to face—trading licks, contributing to a massive groove, spurring each other on—it's one of the great musical traditions.

In the '30s, the idea of the "drum battle" took hold in popular culture, and crowds flocked to see and hear the percussive gods of the day duke it out on the bandstand. By the '60s, the "entertainment" approach to double-drum performances was superceded by ambitious jazz leaders like John Coltrane and Miles Davis, who envisioned new musical worlds that exploited the rhythms and colors four hands and four feet could create.

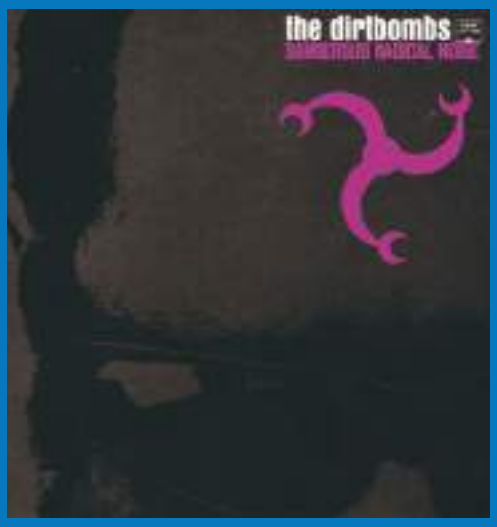
Soon, adventurous rock groups like The Grateful Dead and The Allman Brothers Band took the idea and ran with it, recording and improvising live on tunes that blew open the doors of rhythmic perception. And the tradition lives on today, from rockers looking for some extra heavy rhythmic wallop, to jam bands exploring rhythmic complexities, to R&B greats like Beyoncé—whose two set drummers grace this month's cover.

In the following group of tunes, don't look for lots of cuts featuring two guys blowing impressively but not saying much. Rather, this hugely diverse list focuses on performances bursting with invention, synchronicity, emotion, and sometimes just plain fun. Technique freaks need not worry anyway, there's *plenty* of head-spinning licks to be found here too. So whip out your headphones, keep your hands on the balance knob, and let's dig in.

Benjamin Jesse Blackwell & Patrick J. Pantano

"21st Century Fox"

The Dirtbombs
Dangerous Magical Noise



The Dirtbombs are all about giant guitar riffs, energetic performances, impassioned vocals, and a thunderous double-drum approach on every song. This tune from their 2003 album, *Dangerous Magical Noise,* is no exception. The drum hooks here are in the draggy ghost notes coming out of the right-side drumkit, and the drum/vocal breakdown at 2:25 is a time-honored device perfectly executed.

22 David Dix & Monte Yoho

"Stick Around For Rock & Roll"

The Outlaws Bring It Back Alive

"Florida's Guitar Army" never got the respect afforded The Allmans or Lynyrd Skynyrd, but they definitely had their own thing happening, as this track from their 1978 double live album proves. Sure, there's the classic feel-good Southern grooves, but check out all the different dynamic turns this set opener takes, and give it up for the excellent way Dix and Yoho sculpt the arrangement.

21

Brian Deck & Ben Massarella

"Chinese Balls"

Red Red Meat
There's A Star Above The Manger Tonight

Members of this Chicago-area band now comprise the highly regarded Califone. Back in '97 RRM was dramatically expanding its sound palette, especially in the percussive realm. On this track Brian Deck and Ben Massarella meld echoes of John Bonham and Tom Waits/Elvis Costello percussionist Michael Blair into an artsy but sexy multi-angle rhythm.

20 Jim Keltner & Matt Chamberlain

"Paranoid Android"

Brad Mehldau Largo

This is a cover of a highlight tune from Radiohead's *OK Computer* album. Here pianist Brad Mehldau and his band—which on this 2005 album includes two of the most highly regarded freelance drummers in history, elder statesman Jim Keltner and famed studio cat Matt Chamberlain—sound wonderful playing live in one room. Around two minutes in, Mehldau's interpretation of the song's heavy-rock section comes in the form of a driving, tom-heavy groove divided between the two kit players. This adds an exotic and effective element not hinted at by the original.

19

Dale Crover & Coady Willis

"Civilized Worm"

Melvins A Senile Animal

On the latest album by the Northwest's favorite sons, the core Melvins lineup is augmented by drummer Coady Willis of the group Big Business. You thought Melvins beats were big and bad *before*; the kings of sludgy underground bluster have only deepened their groove with age, and with the extra percussive power Willis brings to the table. Things get real cool here at about the five-minute mark, as the rest of the band fades away, leaving Crover and Willis driving an eighteen-wheeler of a floor tom rumble. (Wonder what the sticking here is. Let us know if you figure it out.)

25

24

Terry Lee Miall & Merrick

"Stand And Deliver"

Adam And The Ants Prince Charming

Among the many musical strains new wave incorporated was the sort of faux tribal groove Bow Wow Wow, Bananarama, and, most successfully, Adam And The Ants worked. Thunderous Burundi-like tom slamming delivers pure fun and excitement to this 1981 track. Imagine this one with only one set player, and you begin to understand the genius here.

23

John Herndon & John McEntire

"Five Too Many"

Tortoise It's All Around You

Live, the talented Tortoise ensemble constantly rotates positions, with McEntire and Herndon often playing tandem kit together. This track from 2004's *It's All Around You* simmers along all calm and collected, as an interweaving Afro-beat-like drum groove bounces by. *So* smart and sophisticated.

18 King Coffee & Theresa Nervosa

"Cherub"

Butthole Surfers
Psychic…Powerless…Another Man's Sac

Oh, the deliciously messy sound of Butthole Surfers. In 1984, the hugely influential Texas psychedelic punk band featured the brother/sister drum team of King Coffee and Theresa Nervosa. This cut from the band's debut full-length album particularly captures the duo's contribution to the foreboding tension—just teetering enough to make you feel appropriately off-balance, but never losing the thread. A great example of rhythmic flavor.

17 Narada Michael Walden & Ed Greene

"Come Dancing"

Jeff Beck Wired

Listen carefully to this track from ex-Yardbirds guitar slinger Jeff Beck's 1976 fusion classic. Ed Green's slinky beat is nearly double-tracked by second drummer Narada Michael Walden, who wastes little time launching into some ripping fills. This is one funky excuse for percussive fireworks, not to mention a cosmic Beck solo.

16 Bill Kreutzman & Mickey Hart

"St. Stephen"

Grateful Dead Live Dead

The *Live Dead* take of this favorite wallops the original version found on 1969's *Aoxomoxoa* album, and ideally captures the dual spirit of Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzman. The tandem drum fills add a level of sophistication to the band's songs, and the super-groovy vibe here is classic Dead.

15 Brendan Canty & Jerry Busher

"Ex-Spectator"

Fugazi The Argument

Like The Melvins, DC art-punk godfathers Fugazi have stayed relevant by constantly advancing their methods and continuing to write great, unpredictable songs. For 2001's *The Argument*, the group added second drummer Jerry Busher to their lineup, and the cut "Ex-Spectator" clearly shows that the band came up with plenty of solid rhythmic ideas to try in the studio. What an awesome mid-tempo groove Busher and long-time drummer Brendan Canty set up, and check out the way they seamlessly finish each other's thoughts. The rideout features a particularly cool split approach to the backbeat.

14 Art Tripp & Jimmy Carl Black

"Toads Of The Short Forest"

The Mothers Of Invention
Weasels Ripped My Flesh

After exactly one minute, this dainty little jazz lilt takes an extreme detour into odd-time multi-rhythmic clobber. Thirty seconds later, right-channel drummer Art Tripp adds another polyrhythmic layer, then falls back in line. Soon Zappa takes the mic to describe exactly what's going on: "At this very moment on the stage, we have drummer A playing in 7/8, drummer B playing in 3/4, the bass playing in 3/4, the organ playing in 5/8…" well, we won't give it *all* away. Suffice to say, Zappa was pushing his drummers into uncharted territory in the late '60s, and never stopped.

13 Greg Saunier & Zach Hill

"Ill Pearls"

Nervous Cop Nervous Cop

To be fair, we could have picked almost any track from this 2003 collaboration between artful Deerhoof drummer Greg Saunier and monstrous Hella slammer Zach Hill. The music here is audacious, unusual, and insistent, each song representing a perfect microcosm of Saunier/Hill's seismic sonic world. Via copious electronic manipulation, Saunier manages to make the duo's rhythmic mashes even more evil-sounding than they normally do—and to be sure, these two can individually cause quite a ruckus. This stuff needs to be heard to be believed.

12 Bill Bruford & Pat Mastelotto

"Sex Eat Sleep Drink Dream"

King Crimson Thrak

For the '90s version of King Crimson, leader Robert Fripp chose to expand the rhythm section with bass/stick player Trey Gunn and electronic drummer Pat Mastelotto. This song from the 1995 album *Thrak* starts off with a cool, percolating division of rhythmic labor. But at 1:40 all hell breaks loose, with Mastelotto and Bill Bruford taking a crazed yet uncanily precise approach to polyrhythmic layering. Things quiet down again for a while, but before you can get too comfortable, the displaced-beat/intertwining-drum nastiness returns at 3:42, clarifying who's *really* the boss in this advanced musical territory.

11 Don Alias & Jack DeJohnette

"Miles Runs The Voodoo Down"

Miles Davis Bitches Brew

A track Miles had been playing for a while, "Voodoo" just didn't seem to gel during the famous 1969 *Bitches Brew* sessions. At least not until percussionist Don Alias had a beat idea, based on New Orleans parade rhythms, that he thought would work. Jack DeJohnette couldn't quite cop the feel, so Miles had Alias play the drumset part himself. Reflecting Miles' interest in then current R&B rhythms, *this* "Voodoo" was a whole new thing, funky as all get-out, and itching to break beyond the borders. And that's just where DeJohnette's genius takes over, splattering all sorts of rhythmic invention on top.

10 Jim Keltner & Jim Gordon

"The Letter"

Joe Cocker Mad Dogs And Englishmen

Drummers-to-the-stars Jim Gordon and Jim Keltner show up elsewhere on this list, in other pairings. This classic song from Joe Cocker's enormous and enormously *powerful* 1971 touring band is simply glorious. The vocal/drum breakdown at 3:19 is one of rock's all-time great moments. And guess what? This historic tour was captured on film, and was very recently made available on DVD.

9 Billy Higgins & Ed Blackwell

"What Reason Could I Give"

Ornette Coleman Science Fiction

Jazz iconoclast Ornette Coleman featured a sort of double trio on several cuts of this unusual 1971 album. Unexpected vocals appear on each of those tracks, including this one, which seems to be simultaneously moving at two different speeds. To "get" this music, it's helpful to think of it as aural modern art; stop fighting against what it *isn't*, and just enjoy the ride. In this case, master jazz drummers Ed Blackwell and Billy Higgins propel the song with blurring, tumbling inertia.

8 Ringo Starr & Jim Keltner

"Wah-Wah"

George Harrison

The Concert For Bangladesh

Legend has it that this concert marked the first time Ringo and Keltner played together. It's hard to imagine how their future double-drum recordings could possibly reveal a more unified approach. The magic drum pairing on this opening rock tune from Harrison's famous Madison Square Garden fund-raiser is especially clear on the recently released DVD of the event; the relaxed concentration on Keltner's face as he grooves alongside the former Beatle—completing his ideas, prodding him along—is completely inspiring. Could Keltner be the ultimate drum duo partner?

7 Jim Gordon & Jeff Porcaro

"Parker's Band"

Steely Dan Pretzel Logic

Teacher/student…seasoned vet/hungry upstart…peers? The relationship between ubiquitous studio drummers Jim Gordon and Jeff Porcaro is an intriguing one. They got a rare opportunity to double drum on this 1974 Steely Dan ode to jazz great Charlie Parker. In a mere 2 minutes and 45 seconds, the elegant groove these two masters lay down generates enough lift to levitate a sumo wrestler.

6 Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez & Robby Ameen

"Richie's Brain"

El Negro And Robby At The Third World War

They might not be actual brothers, but Robby and Negro certainly share the same musical DNA. This fun one-minute track from the drummers' excellent 2002 album might not hint at all the diverse musical concepts the pair hit across the disc, but as a representation of pure dual-drumming daring, it can't be beat. Dig those blistering tom fills whizzing by, those simultaneously negotiated time shifts. And you think that's an insane use of panning you hear? Nope, that's the sound of four arms and four feet, hard left and hard right, in perfect unison.

5 Phil Collins & Chester Thompson

"Afterglow"

Genesis Seconds Out

When Phil Collins took over vocal duties following the departure of original Genesis singer Peter Gabriel, he obviously needed to spend more time out front during their concerts. After a brief run with Bill Bruford touring with the band, Phil intentionally sought out Chester Thompson to be his "surrogate" drummer, since he was a big fan of Chester's work in Weather Report and of his double drumming with Ralph Humphrey on Frank Zappa's *Roxy & Elsewhere* album. He even nicked a Humphrey/Thompson rhythmic device for the live presentation of this dramatic Genesis ballad, found on 1977's *Seconds Out*. The result is that this version is even more powerful than the studio cut on *Wind And Wuthering*. Besides maybe Levon Helm on The Band's "The Weight," it's hard to think of more tear-jerking tom fills committed to tape. And the effortless volleys between the two drummers prove that Phil's instincts about Chester were correct. Timeless moment: the dovetailing fills at 3:36.

More Daring Duos...

Steve Gadd & Chris Parker (Stuff)

Steve Brookins & Jack Grondin (.38 Special)

Gary Allen & Fred Edwards
(The Charlie Daniels Band)

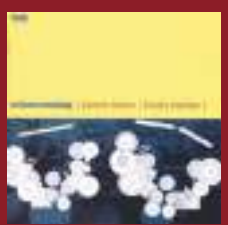
Michael Hossack & John Hartman, Keith Knudsen & Chet McCracken
(The Doobie Brothers)

Sully Erna & Shannon Larkin
(Godsmack)

Stanley Demeski & Dave Weckerman
(The Feelies)

Billy Conway & Jerome Deupree
(Orchestra Morphine)

Pierre Favre & Fredy Studer



René Creemers & Wim De Vries
(The Drumbassadors)

What's Your Favorite Double-Drummer Combo?

Is there a killer double-drum performance absent from this list? Here's your chance to tell us about it! Email *MD* with your choice and a brief explanation of what makes the track cool, and if we use it in our follow-up Double Drummer story on moderndrummer.com, we'll send you a free *MD* T-shirt! Email your choices to adamb@moderndrummer.com.

Special thanks to Mike Dawson, Michael Parillo, Ken Micallef, Mike Haid, Robin Tolleson, and Bill Miller for research on this story.

4 Elvin Jones & Rashied Ali

"The Father And The Son And The Holy Ghost"

John Coltrane Meditations

In 1965, revolutionary sax player John Coltrane expanded his famous quartet by adding another saxist, modern titan Pharoah Sanders, as well as drummer Rashied Ali, who played alongside long-time Coltrane collaborator Elvin Jones. Elvin would eventually leave Coltrane because he just couldn't get with Coltrane's new concept on *Meditations*. But the sheer emotional power the new musical combination elicited is hard to ignore. On this first, nearly thirteen-minute section from the record, note that Rashied is in the left channel and Elvin is in the right, and listen as Ali stays mostly on the snare and cymbal, while Elvin rumbles on the toms with mallets, until the tambourine cues him to grab his sticks (3:12). From there on, both drummers engage in full-kit commentary. The track ends with Elvin playing one of his classic Latin-ish waltzes.

Ralph Humphrey & Chester Thompson

"Don't You Ever Wash That Thing?"

Frank Zappa/Mothers Roxy & Elsewhere

The album that tweaked a thousand drummers—including Phil Collins—this live document of the über-precise Zappa band circa 1974 is simply mind-blowing. The dual (duel?) drum solo found on the third section of the side 3 medley is what air-drumming was invented for. So fast, so clean, so joyful. Zappa owned this sort of surreal, high-energy progressive territory.

2 3

Jai Johanny Johanson & Butch Trucks

"Trouble No More"

The Allman Brothers Band Eat A Peach

Ask a music fan about double drumming, and invariably they'll name-check The Allman Brothers Band first. And for good reason. Never in rock history did a drum duo hook up so subliminally, so consistently, and with so much swagger. Johanson and Trucks were *so* of one mind, in fact, that you can choose almost any Allmans track and immediately get sucked into the rhythmic bed. We picked this great tune because we love the way Jaimoe and Butch's heavy shuffle introduces the song. And the famous fill that leads into the last chorus… well…that's just too good to ignore.

Courtesy Of Discipline Global Mobile

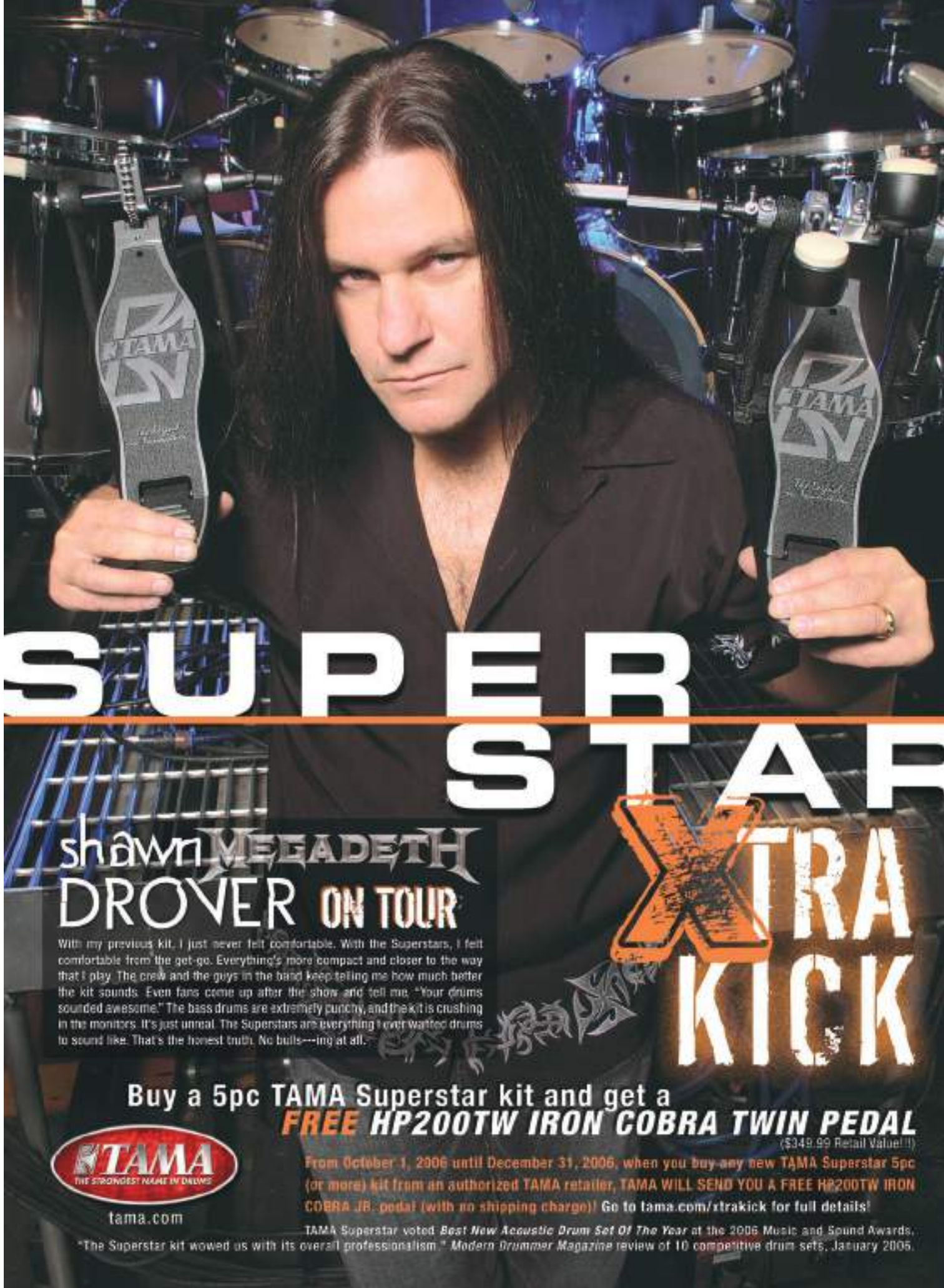
Jamie Muir & Bill Bruford

"Larks' Tongues In Aspic, Part Two"

King Crimson Larks' Tongues In Aspic

If the necessary ingredients for a killer double-drummer performance include awesome technique, unique sounds, undeniable emotional impact, creative and fun rhythmic ideas, and high drama, then this track is, indeed, the perfect double drummer recording. Bill Bruford left British progessive rock band Yes in 1972 to join Robert Fripp's more avant-garde troupe, King Crimson, with whom he would make numerous rhythmic breakthroughs in the coming decades. *Larks' Tongues* was Bruford's Crimson debut. It's also the band's only album to feature drummer & percussionist/presence Jamie Muir, an inventive, shocking player who Bruford often cites as being particularly influential on him. Here the two treat their drumkits like a playground of sound, especially Muir, with his "prepared" kit. Though clearly different sorts of players, the rhythmic personality the unit adds to the music is absolutely integral, and helps make this *the* original dark & demanding heavy rock album. At about 5:15 the intensity level coming from Bruford and Muir threatens to explode the whole darned thing. Drumming bliss.

Hear the cuts discussed in this article at www.moderndrummer.com.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Cast Your Votes In Modern Drummer's 2007 Readers Poll

Got a favorite drummer or percussionist? Was there a clinician who inspired you this year...or a great instructional DVD? Here's your chance to share your opinion and acknowledge the contributions of your favorite artists and educators over the past twelve months.

It just takes a moment to list your choices, either on the enclosed ballot or online. So pick up your pen or grab your mouse, and make your vote count!

Instructions:

1. You may use the official *MD* ballot from the magazine, or a photocopy. You may also vote by email. (See below.)
2. All ballots must include your name, address, and signature.
3. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box.
4. Make only one selection in each category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.
5. Place the ballot in an envelope, affix appropriate postage, and mail to *Modern Drummer*'s offices at 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.
6. Ballots must be postmarked no later than **February 15, 2007.** Results will be announced in the July 2007 issue of *MD*.
7. PRIZE DRAWING**:** Providing your name, address, and signature automatically makes you eligible for *MD*'s voter-appreciation drawing. Three ballots will be drawn at random; each winner will receive a free one-year subscription to *Modern Drummer*.

To Cast Your Vote Online:

1. Go to: www.moderndrummer.com.
2. Click on the ballot button located on the home page.
3. Fill in your selections in the appropriate fields on the ballot.
4. You must complete the fields for your name and mailing address. Anonymous email entries will be disqualified.
5. After you have entered your selections, press the "Submit" button.

(Note: Your browser must accept cookies in order for your vote to count.)

MD's 2007 Readers Poll Official Ballot

CATEGORIES

Hall Of Fame: Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made a historic contribution to the art of drumming. Current members of the Hall Of Fame are not eligible for this category. They are: **Gene Krupa**, **Buddy Rich**, **John Bonham**, **Keith Moon**, **Neil Peart**, **Steve Gadd**, **Louie Bellson**, **Tony Williams**, **Billy Cobham**, **Joe Morello**, **Carl Palmer**, **Bill Bruford**, **Art Blakey**, **Max Roach**, **Jeff Porcaro**, **Larrie Londin**, **Elvin Jones**, **Vinnie Colaiuta**, **Terry Bozzio**, **Ringo Starr**, **Roy Haynes**, **Dave Weckl**, **Dennis Chambers**, **Steve Smith**, **Simon Phillips**, **Mike Portnoy**, **Stewart Copeland**, and **Charlie Watts**.

Rock: Mainstream, modern, emo, alternative, etc.

Metal:

Punk:

Prog:

R&B/Hip-Hop: Contemporary urban music styles.

Traditional R&B: Funk, soul, blues, etc.

Pop:

Jam Band:

Traditional Jazz:
Bebop, swing, Dixieland, big band, etc.

Contemporary Jazz:
Post-bop, avant-garde, and other modern jazz styles.

Fusion: Jazz-rock, electric jazz, new age, etc.

World Music: Latin, reggae, Afro-beat, Indian, etc.

Studio: Sessions, jingles, TV, and film scores.

Country:

Percussionist:
Hand, ethnic, and specialty percussion artists.

Up & Coming:
The most promising drummer of the past twelve months.

All-Around:
Excellence in a variety of musical styles and applications.

Clinician:

Method Book: Please name the book and author.

Educational DVD: Please name the DVD and artist.

Recorded Performance:
Please name the drummer, the band or artist, and the title.

Name:

Address:

City: **State:** **Zip:**

Phone:

Email:

Signature:

Billy Martin

Workshop In The Making

Story by Michael Dawson

When Medeski Martin & Wood drummer Billy Martin moved into his current home in northern New Jersey, he knew right away what would become of the house's one-car garage. "The garage was so small that it wasn't really possible to fit a car in it," says Billy. "So I decided to close it off, give it some heat and

As he was constructing his future drum pad, Billy did everything he could to keep outside noise to a minimum, without going overboard. "We tried to avoid attaching the walls to the outer shell of the garage, but there are points where we had to," explains the drummer. "We used thicker sheet rock, and there's sound-deadening board between the sheet rock and the studs. The studs are also sitting on rubber plates, so it won't vibrate the house. And the wood floor is sitting on thick foam rubber. I also put in a drop ceiling with some insulation above it, and used ceiling tiles that aren't smooth, which helps break up the sound." To make the room a little more aesthetically and musically pleasing, Billy made a special amendment to the wall directly in front of the drums. "The front wall is made of plywood instead of sheetrock, and I put in a sliding Japanese window that I got from percussionist Cyro Baptista."

The drummer also found some creative ways to optimize the room's tight 10x10 space. "I found some cabinets at IKEA that are made to hold shoes," says Billy. "They're perfect for storage because they don't come out very far. I store all of my loose percussion and sticks in them. They also help break up the sound."

So just how soundproof is the room? "I could play at night and it wouldn't wake anybody up," Billy assures. "But I don't do that because I'm on the road so much."

While most of his time is dedicated to his work with MMW

Alan Martin

and various projects for his label, Amulet Records, Billy also uses his new space to share his experience and knowledge with others. "I teach at home, which is fun for my students because they get to hang out at my place. I have a lot of my percussion instruments here, so at each lesson we can try different instruments and improvise together."

With only a casual glance around the room, it's obvious that this drummer has amassed a unique collection of percussion from across the globe. "Whenever I see something cool and I like the sound of it, I'll get it. I have some stuff here from Brazil, west and central Africa, and there are some unusual things like my wooden cowbell from Napal."

The centerpiece of the converted garage is Billy's mismatched drumkit. "It's made up of Rogers Holiday toms, a Powertone snare, and a Rastafarian Nyabhinghi drum that I use as a bass drum," Martin explains. "I thought this drum would make a great surdo [Brazilian bass drum]. Then I put it on its side, stuck a little Velcro on the bottom to keep it from sliding, and put a DW pedal on it. I took this drum on the road with Medeski Martin & Wood in the early days, and it's also on some of the tracks from my *illy B Eats* records."

Alan Martin

In addition to teaching, Billy uses his drum room to lay down tracks on a simple laptop-based studio. Some of those recordings have appeared on the drummer's funky break-beat collection *illy B Eats Box Set Volumes 1–3*, as well as MMW's 2004 release, *End Of The World Party*. "I tracked all of the percussion parts for that record in this room," Billy recalls. "When we were ready to record the overdubs, I had a two-month-old baby, so there was no way that I was going to go to LA with Chris and John to finish the record. So our producer, John King, sent me the mixes, and I loaded them into Pro Tools. Then I plugged a couple of $200 Rode NT1-A mics into my Mbox and improvised the percussion parts."

For recording, Billy alternates between two pieces of software. "I like a program called Peak for basic two-track editing. I can use Peak to record straight into my computer without having to have the Mbox plugged in." Billy continues, "I recorded and edited some of *illy B Eats Volume 2* on Peak. I basically took out the worst parts of my beats [laughs] and created a track."

While Billy enjoys the simplicity of Peak, he's also outfitted with Pro Tools. "Ultimately, Pro Tools is the most versatile and powerful program. I'm not really a sequencing guy. Even though I have a Roland SP-12 drum machine and an Akai sampler, I like to lay tracks live. Then I can use Pro Tools like a real-time sampler/sequencer to move things around."

Alan Martin

Billy, along with his son Dakota, percussionist Cyro Baptista, and several students, in the future home of the Cyro Baptista/Billy Martin percussion workshop

And as if having an ideal place to practice, record, and teach *inside* his home wasn't good enough, at the time of our visit, Billy was putting the finishing touches on a true "woodshed" in his backyard. "I needed a place to work," explains Billy. "I like to build things, and also I'm a painter. So I wanted a place where I could do woodwork or paint. I also wanted to have a bigger space to get together with other musicians. It's another step toward being independent and creative without having to pay for a rental space."

Once it came time to begin construction on what would become his 12x16 oak barn, Billy enlisted the help of some of his students. "I put the foundation and the posts up in early spring of '06," says Billy. "After that, some of my students stepped in and helped me. Then they would save money on lessons. They also learn a little more about who I am and how I think. For a lot of them, that's what they want to know."

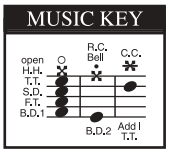
The drummer's new barn will also be the future home of the Cyro Baptista / Billy Martin percussion workshop series. "At the time that I started to build the barn, Cyro Baptista and I started doing percussion workshops at his house," says Billy. "We're planning to have some of the future workshops in the barn."

To find out more about Billy's workshop series, his *illy B Eats* box set, and his various other projects, log on to www.amuletrecords.com.

Cozy Powell

A Retrospective In Rock

by Ed Breckenfeld



On the all-time list of important British rock drummers, one name that often goes unfairly overlooked is Cozy Powell. Unlike John Bonham (Led Zeppelin), Keith Moon (The Who), Ginger Baker (Cream), or Ian Paice (Deep Purple), Powell isn't linked to one hugely successful act. Cozy was a rock 'n' roll nomad, moving from band to band every few years while amassing a long list of credits.

Through it all, Powell's dynamic playing left a giant influence on the hard rock and metal drummers of his era. This month's special *Off The Record* takes a retrospective look at the late, great Cozy Powell.

"Ice Cream Cakes"
Jeff Beck, *Jeff Beck Group* (1972)

After starting his career as a session player in England, Powell attained his first international acclaim as a member of the early-'70s Jeff Beck Group. Beck showcased Cozy by having him open this album with the following interesting intro. The toms-to-bass triplet ruff would become a favorite Powell lick. (0:00)

"Going Down," *Jeff Beck Group*

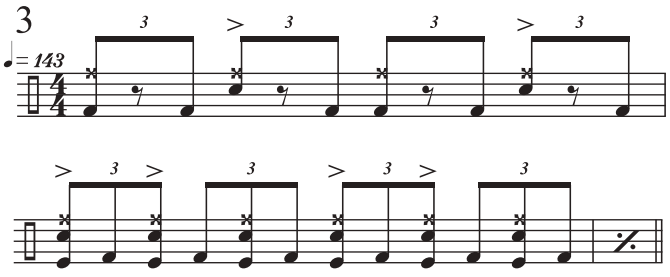
Beck turned this blues tune into a high-energy funk classic. Cozy opened his one-handed 16th notes on the backbeat to help deepen the groove. Here's the end of the second chorus, where Powell switches to a paradiddle kick/snare groove under driving 8th notes on the bell of the ride. (1:55)

"Starstruck"
Rainbow, *Rising* (1976)

When Jeff Beck dissolved his group to make way for Beck Bogert & Appice (with Carmine Appice on drums), Cozy went back to doing sessions, including a few releases under his own

name. In 1976, he began one of his longer stretches as a bandmember when he joined Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow.

Rising, their first recording together, became a seminal album in the development of heavy metal. This is where Powell's reputation as a double-bass powerhouse begins to take hold. While many rock drummers at this time were using double kicks primarily in solos and end-of-song rave-ups, Powell began working them into fills and grooves wherever he could. Here's an example from the end of the first verse in "Starstruck." (0:49)

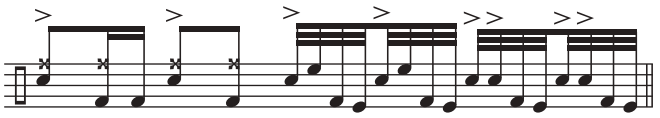


"Stargazer," *Rising*

This cut, the musical heart of the album, is an eight-minute metal opus containing some outstanding drumming. Powell opens the song with a short solo that's based around another one of his signature riffs: the right-left-bass-bass quad. The fact that Blackmore let Cozy take the intro to this key song indicates how important his drumming was to the sound of the band. (0:00)

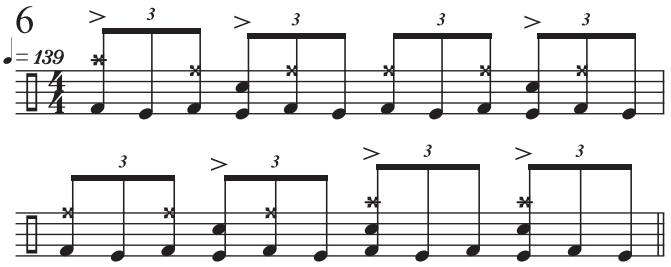
Cozy's quad lick returns during the chorus. (1:23)

"Devil & Daughter"



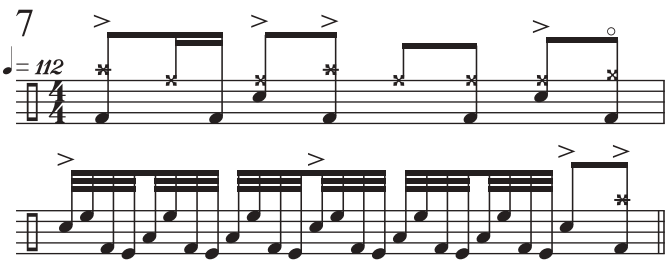
Black Sabbath, *Headless Cross* (1989)

After five years with Rainbow, Powell decided it was time for a change. He worked both with Michael Schenker and Whitesnake for a time, along with the short-lived Emerson, Lake & Powell, before winding up in Black Sabbath in the late '80s. Cozy co-produced *Headless Cross*, and his drumming is mixed up front and drenched in the era's huge gated-reverb sound. Here's his triplet double bass groove from the guitar solo section of "Devil & Daughter." (2:53)



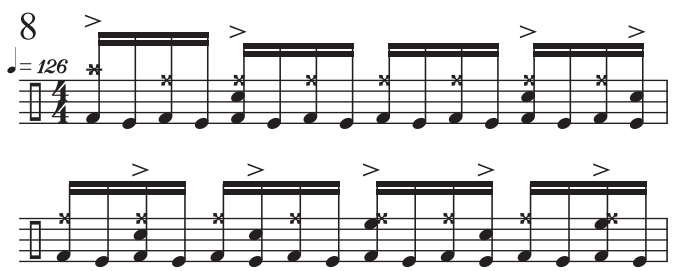
"Call Of The Wild," *Headless Cross*

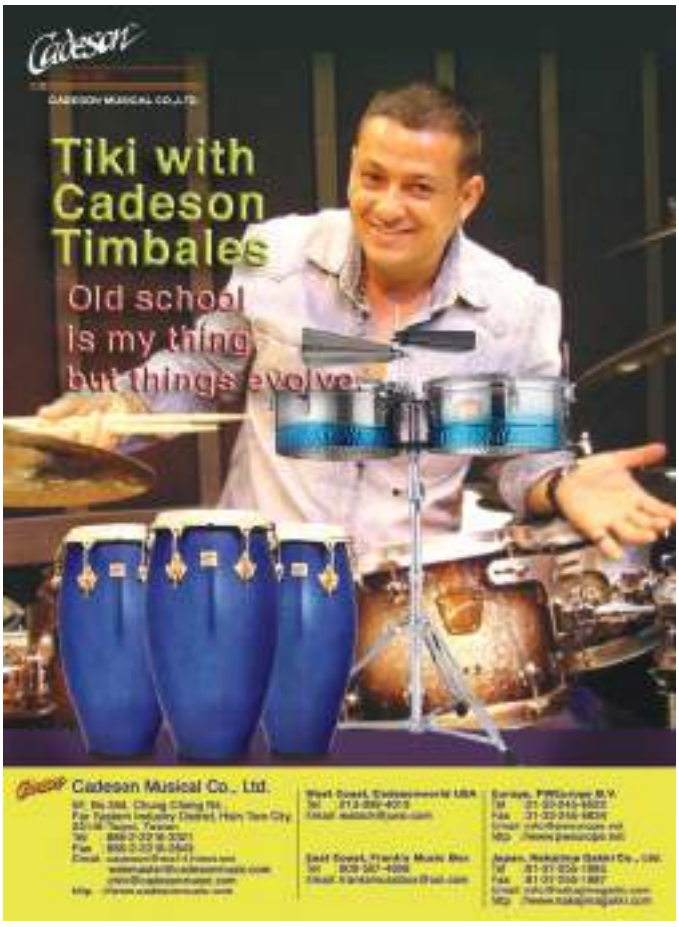
In the out-chorus of this song, Powell executes another classic fill. This one clusters quads into twelve-note groupings so that he can return to his snare accent on the fourth beat of the measure. (4:49)



"Rightwing," *Headless Cross*

The fade-out of the album's last track features some great riffing over double-kick 16th notes. Here, Cozy works an against-the-beat phrase with snare, toms, and crash cymbals. (6:15)





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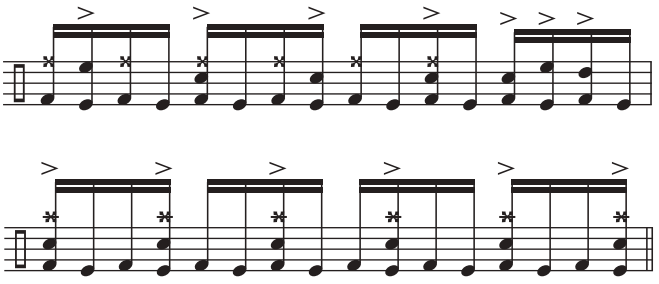


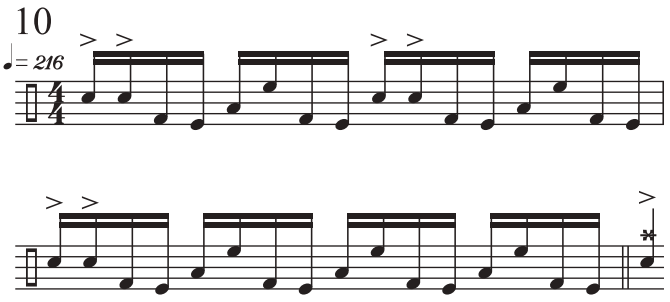
"Enemy"
Yngwie Malmsteen, *Facing The Animal* (1998)

Powell was in and out of Sabbath over the next several years, and continued with other projects until he landed with Yngwie Malmsteen in 1997. Many years of recording had honed Cozy's playing into a lean blend of power and groove, which was the right approach to accompany the Swedish guitar hero. Here's his cool 7/8 beat from an Yngwie composition with prog-rock overtones. (0:22)

"Poison In Your Veins," *Facing The Animal*

Near the end of the album, Cozy pulled out his favorite quad lick for a blazing fill at the climax of this song. (3:26)

Three months after the release of *Facing The Animal*, Cozy



Powell was on a break from touring with Malmsteen when he crashed his car in England. His injuries proved fatal, bringing to a close the long and varied career of one of England's finest hard rock drummers.

You can contact **Ed Breckenfeld** through his Web site: www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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Effective Warm-Ups

Fun With Singles And Doubles

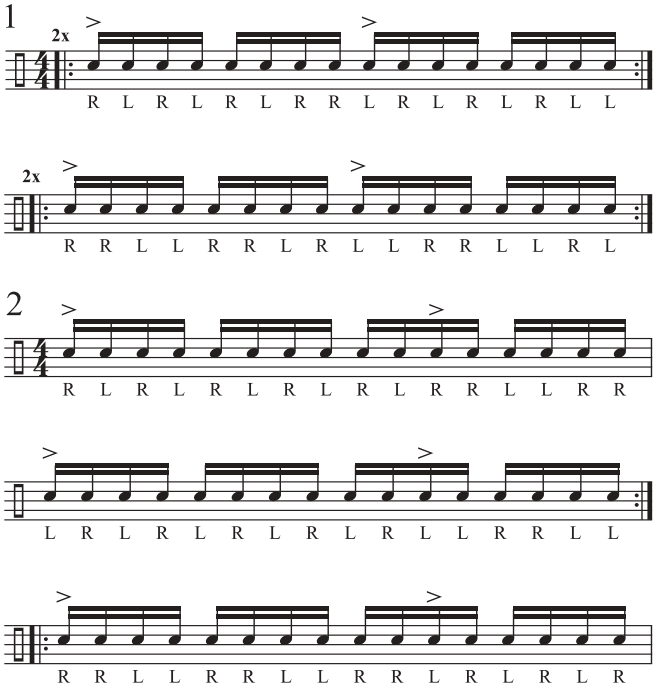
by Ari Hoenig

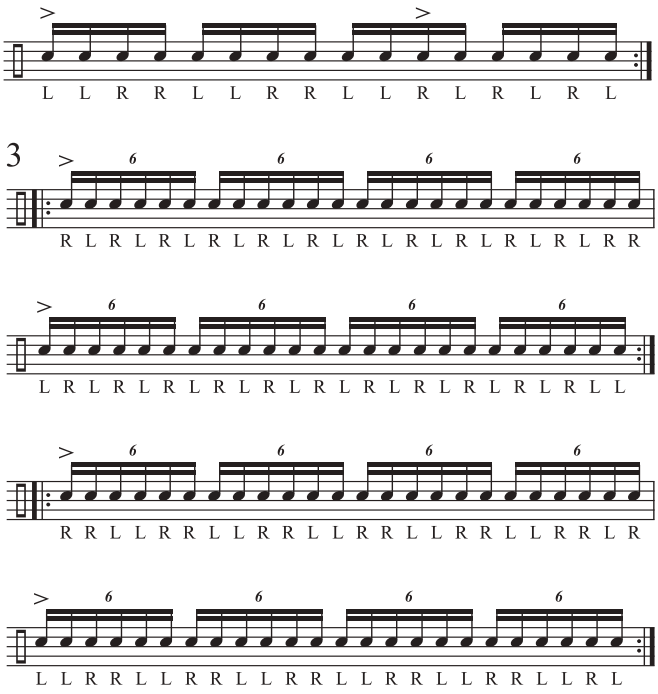
Imagine this: It's freezing outside, and you're on your way to a gig. You arrive at the destination but you aren't sure where you'll be setting up. When you finally catch sight of the bandleader, you ask him, "Where are we playing?" He points to a small stage outdoors.

Okay, this may be a bit extreme. But most of us have been in a situation where we've had to perform when the temperature on the bandstand was way below what we had hoped for. Even if it's not particularly cold out, it's still a good idea to warm up before a gig. Not only will it strengthen and loosen up your hands, but it will make you feel more relaxed and help you to sound better from the very first note.

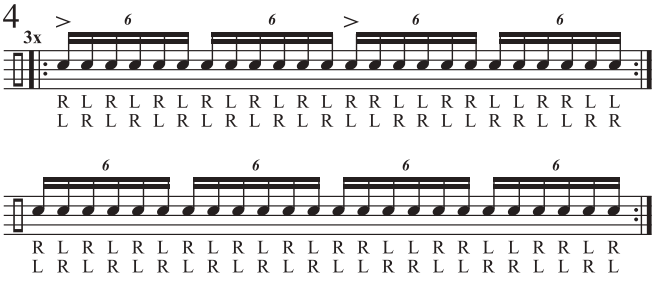
Following are some hand warm-ups that I use before gigs. They incorporate the two most basic rudiments: double- and single-stroke rolls. Ideally, you want these rudiments to sound the same when you switch from one to the other. So try all of the exercises without accents first, and then add the accents. I also recommend staying on each exercise for two to three minutes.

For Examples 1–3, play each sticking two times, and then repeat the entire exercise.

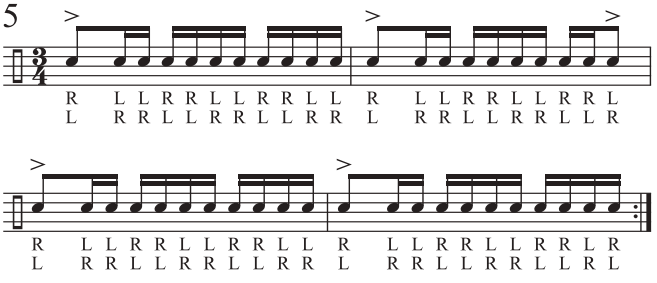



L L R R L L R R L L R L R L R L
3
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R R
L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L L
R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L R L R
L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L R L R L

For Example 4, play the first bar three times and the second bar once. Then repeat the exercise using the reverse sticking.

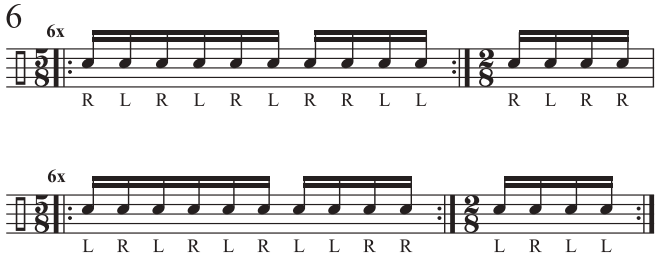


Example 5 is another exercise in which the sticking reverses on the repeat.

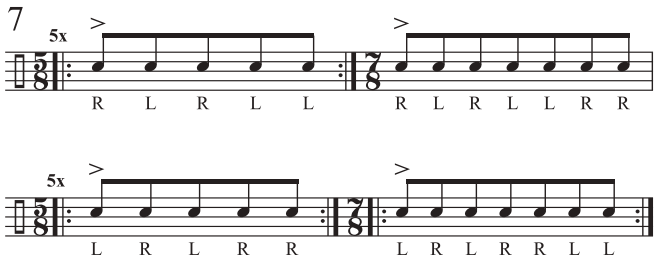


Even though Examples 6–8 are written in odd time signatures, they should be felt over 4/4. (Each sticking pattern adds up to four bars of 4/4). Play both stickings (right- and left-hand lead) and then repeat the whole exercise.

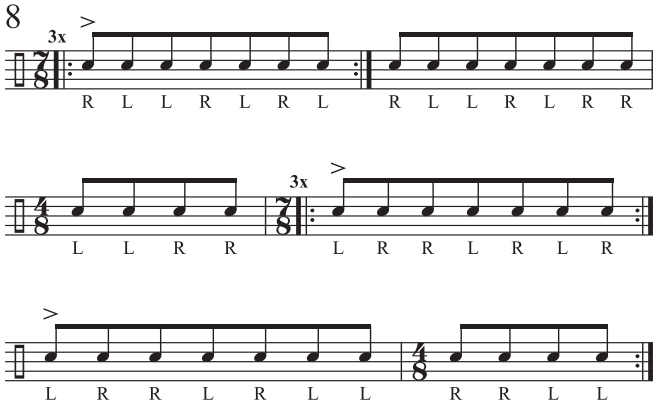
In Example 6, repeat the first and third bars six times each.



For this one, repeat the first and third bars five times.



Repeat measures 1 and 4 in Example 8 three times.

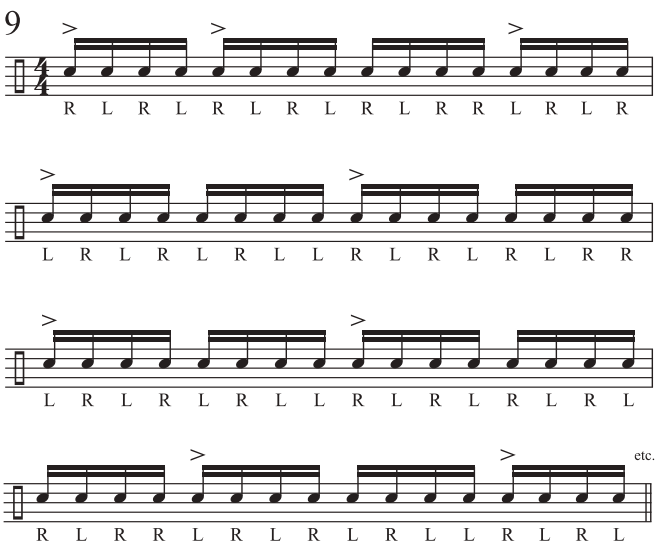


In all of the previous exercises, I'm only giving you sticking patterns. It's the accents, however, that will make these ideas come alive. Come up with different accent patterns of your own to apply to these stickings.

Now let's try applying a single- and double-stroke sticking system to pages 38–45 of the new edition of Ted Reed's classic book, *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer*.

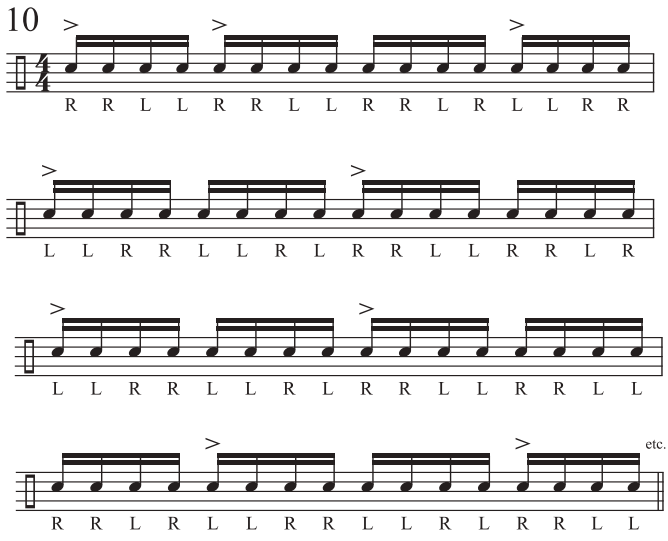
As you read the music, substitute a single-stroke sticking of RLRL or LRLR for every 8th note. Then give the quarter notes, or anything longer, the same single-stroke sticking with a paradiddle attached at the end. So, a quarter note would be RLRL RLRR or LRLR LRLL, and a dotted-quarter note would be RLRL RLRL RLRR or LRLR LRLR LRLL.

Using this system, each measure in *Syncopation* will become two bars. (Note: Rests are included in the value of the notes that come *before* them.) Here's how the first two bars of page 38 would look.



Here's another system to use with *Syncopation*. (It's like the last one, but uses double strokes.) Each 8th note is given the sticking pattern RRLL or LLRR. For a quarter note or longer, play double strokes with a single at the end: RRLL RRLR or LLRR LLRL. A dotted-quarter note would be played as RRLL RRLL RRLR or LLRR LLRR LLRL.

Here are the first two bars of page 38, using this sticking system.



These exercises will help you warm up your hands on a cold day. For the rest of your body, make your mom happy and wear a hat.

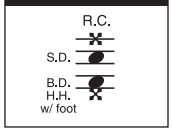
Ari Hoenig is a top New York jazz drummer. He currently works with Kenny Werner, Wayne Krantz, Jean-Michel Pilc, Chris Potter, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. Ari also leads his own band on Monday nights at New York City jazz club Smalls.

The Groove Comp

Patterns To Help You Lay It Down

by Steve Hass

MUSIC KEY



The most common question I get asked from beginning jazz students is about how to comp (accompany) behind a soloist while playing the jazz ride pattern. Besides concentrating on musically conversing with the soloist and playing relative figures in the spaces they leave, I also suggest using something I call the groove comp.

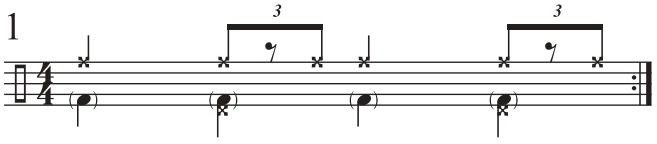
The groove comp is an underlying, repetitive beat that's played beneath the jazz ride pattern. The jazz ride pattern, of course, is the main groove. The groove comp can be played on the snare, or it can incorporate the rest of the kit.

All of the following examples are to be played under a swing ride pattern. For the examples that do not include bass drum, feel free to feather it. (Feathering means to play quarter notes as light as possible so that they're felt rather than heard.)

On the bandstand, I tend to mix things up. I don't stay with one groove comp for very long, and I don't always use this concept. In some tunes, I may spend the entire time improvising rather than playing a pattern.

Here's the basic swing pattern that you should use with each of the groove comps.

1



Art Blakey is the first drummer who comes to mind when I think about left-hand or snare drum groove comps. Here's a simple yet classic Blakey pattern.

2

Here are some examples of one-bar groove comps that I like to use (z = buzz stroke).

3

4

5

6

Here are some two-bar groove comps.

7

8

9

Here are two examples of groove comps that I like to use that incorporate both feet. Feel free to change it up. All of these rhythms can be orchestrated between your hands and feet to make it more interesting. Just remember: This is called a *groove* comp. So don't get too busy.

10

11

To become a great jazz player, it's important to develop "fast ears," which requires that you learn to react to a soloist's ideas without thinking too much. My goal is to help you come up with your own spontaneous patterns that'll inspire a soloist to play a certain way. The comping patterns that I've introduced here are to be played as a part of your groove, not as question/answer interactions with a soloist. However, these ideas will help you invent your own comping patterns that you can use when the time comes to react. Pretty soon you'll be improvising your own groove comps on the gig. Have fun!

Paul La Raia

Steve Hass is a versatile drummer who's toured and/or recorded with John Scofield, Ravi Coltrane, Manhattan Transfer, Suzanne Vega, and many others. His debut solo CD *Traveler* is available through his Web site, www.stevehass.net.

Fast Forward.

photography by Andrew Lepley

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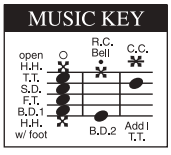
Take It From The Top

15 Great Drumming Intros

by Ed Breckenfeld



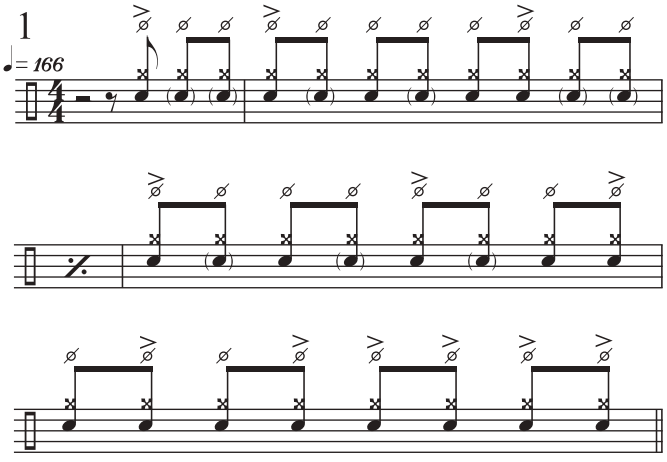
Nothing seizes your attention and pulls you into a song better than a great drum intro. And we're not talking about some random beat or fill that's slapped onto the beginning. A great drum intro has to be interesting enough to warrant standing on its own, while also setting the tone for the music that follows. The best ones become as important to the success of a song as its verse or chorus, and they're so identifiable that you wouldn't think of performing the song without it.

It's certainly no small feat to come up with this kind of intro, and several have stood the test of time. Let's look at a few of these classics to see what makes them so effective.

"Rock And Roll"

John Bonham, Led Zeppelin, *IV*

This is unquestionably one of the most compelling of all drum intros. The excitement and anticipation Bonham generates with his loose hi-hat and snare combination is like the revving of a muscle car's engine before launching down the speedway. Plus, the drummer's offbeat entrance tricks the listener into wondering why the rest of the band came in when they did. The combination of gut-level bashing with brain-teasing cleverness makes it one-of-a-kind.



"Walk This Way"

Joey Kramer, Aerosmith, *Toys In The Attic*

Here's another instantly recognizable intro. Even though this kick/snare pattern has been used countless times, Joey Kramer immortalized this version, shown to him by Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler, with the addition of a lone open hi-hat at the start of each measure. The genius is in the simplicity.

"Ain't Too Proud To Beg"

Benny Benjamin, The Temptations, *Gettin' Ready*

Sometimes a well-played short fill is the perfect choice for a drum intro. Benny Benjamin's tom-to-snare six-stroke roll introduced many '60s Motown classics, including this hit single by the Temptations. The effect of the low-pitched tom sliding to the high rimshot pulls you right into the verse.

"Rock 'N' Roll High School"

Marky Ramone, The Ramones, *End Of The Century*

There's no rule that says a great drum intro has to be complicated. Energy and attitude can carry the day, as in this example from The Ramones. Marky's driving floor tom 8th notes were such a key element of The Ramones' sound that it was fitting to have them open one of the band's biggest hits. His beat is a rallying cry: Get ready to rock!

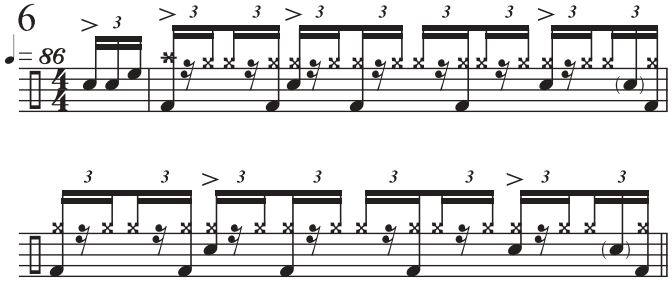
"Take The Money And Run"

Gary Mallaber, The Steve Miller Band, *Fly Like An Eagle*

Of course, an intricate drum intro will always grab a drummer's attention, and Gary Mallaber came up with a winner for the opening of this Steve Miller Band single. While it doesn't sound like his beat for the rest of the song, this four-bar groove/solo sets up the good-time bluesy pop of Miller's hit perfectly. Mallaber's open hi-hat accents, drags, and ghosted snare notes are the main ingredients that make this a classic.

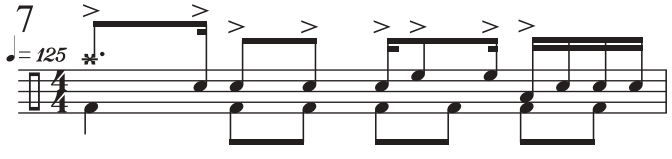
"Rosanna"
Jeff Porcaro, Toto, *IV*

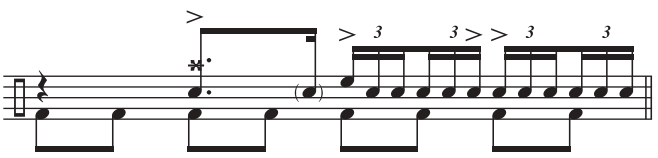
Jeff Porcaro's famous drumbeat for Toto's "Rosanna" has been talked about and analyzed by drummers for almost twenty-five years. In his intro, Porcaro used the bare elements of the pattern to set the mood, inserting one ghost note at the end of each bar to hint at the jaw-dropping groove that follows.



"Make Me Smile" (single version)
Danny Seraphine, Chicago

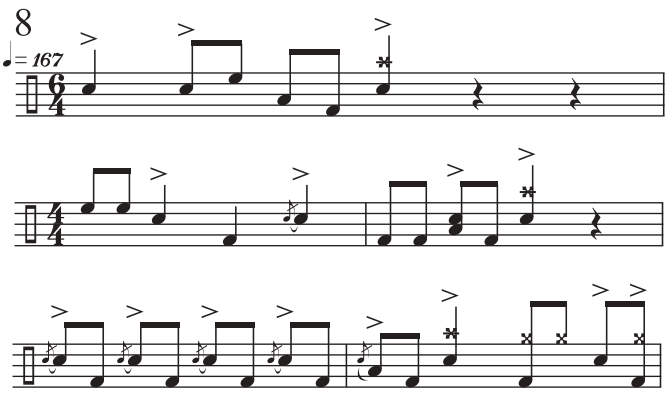
A fiery two-bar drum break has always been a great way to start a song, and few could compose a better short solo than Danny Seraphine with Chicago. On "Make Me Smile," he introduces the themes of syncopation and 16th-note triplets that he returns to later in his climactic four-bar solo near the end of the track.





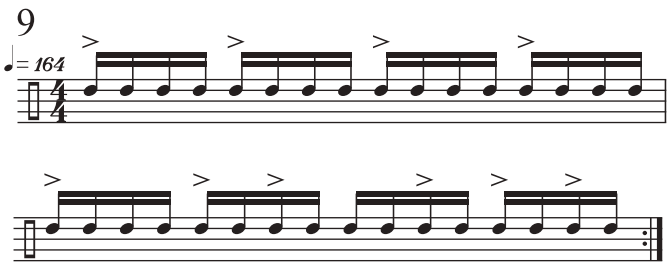
"Middle Of The Road"
Martin Chambers, The Pretenders, *Learning To Crawl*

This interesting intro opens the *Learning To Crawl* album from The Pretenders. Martin Chambers' stop-and-start approach symbolizes the rocky early years of the band. (Two members were lost to drug addiction by this point.) After three measures of disjointed rhythms, the drummer jolts the band into action. This is metaphorical drumming at its best.



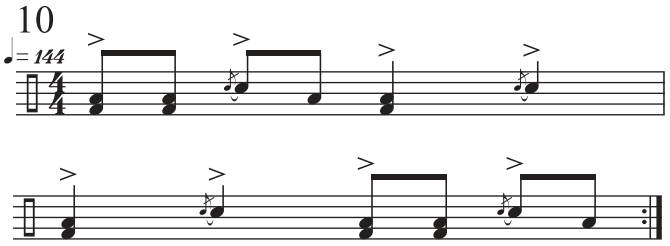
"Wipeout"
Ron Wilson, The Surfaris, *The Surfaris Play Wipeout*

The granddaddy of all rock drum intros is "Wipeout." Ron Wilson's opening 16th note–accent pattern went way beyond its role as the focal point of the song to become an icon of rock drumming history. Countless drummers cut their teeth on this, and after all these years, it remains as one of the most recognizable of all drum rhythms.



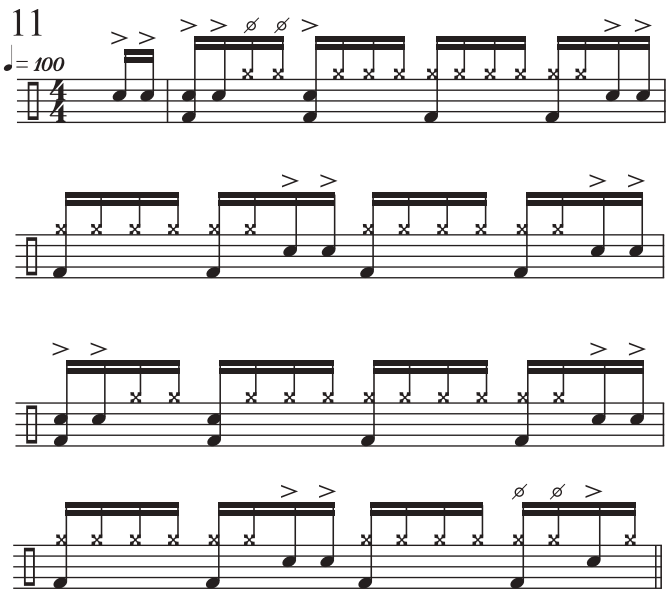
"My Sharona"
Bruce Gary, The Knack, *Get The Knack*

During the summer of 1979, there was no escaping the infectious rhythms of The Knack's "My Sharona," which ruled rock radio in the early new wave era. Bruce Gary, the band's fine drummer who recently passed away, started the song with this party-in-a-box beat. His clever use of the floor tom added to the palpable energy of the groove.



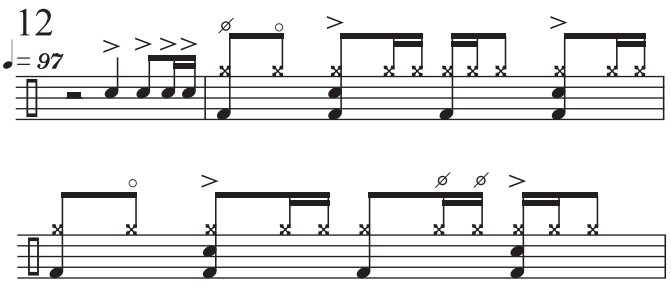
"Sunday Bloody Sunday"
Larry Mullen Jr., U2, *War*

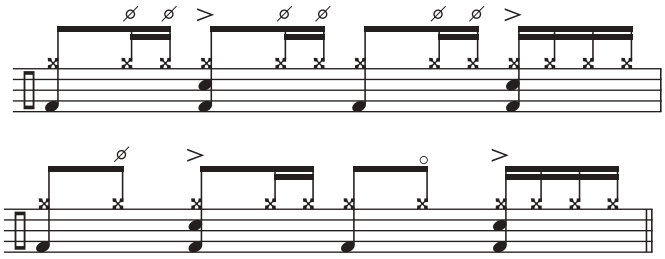
Here's a lesson in how to reflect a song's imagery without resorting to the obvious. Larry Mullin's opening beat is not a march, per se. It's mostly 16th-note hi-hats over a quarter-note kick drum, with a few well-placed snare groupings thrown in. But you can *feel* the impending battle in his playing. A typical marching pattern might have proved too heavy-handed and much less effective.



"Superstition"
Stevie Wonder, *Talking Book*

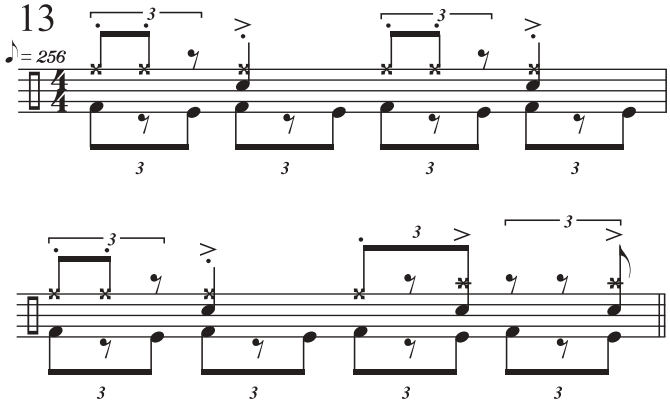
Here's Stevie Wonder's intro to one of his biggest and most-loved hits. This one is all about the swinging 16th-note feel in the hi-hat pattern. When a groove feels this good, you've just *got* to start the song with it.





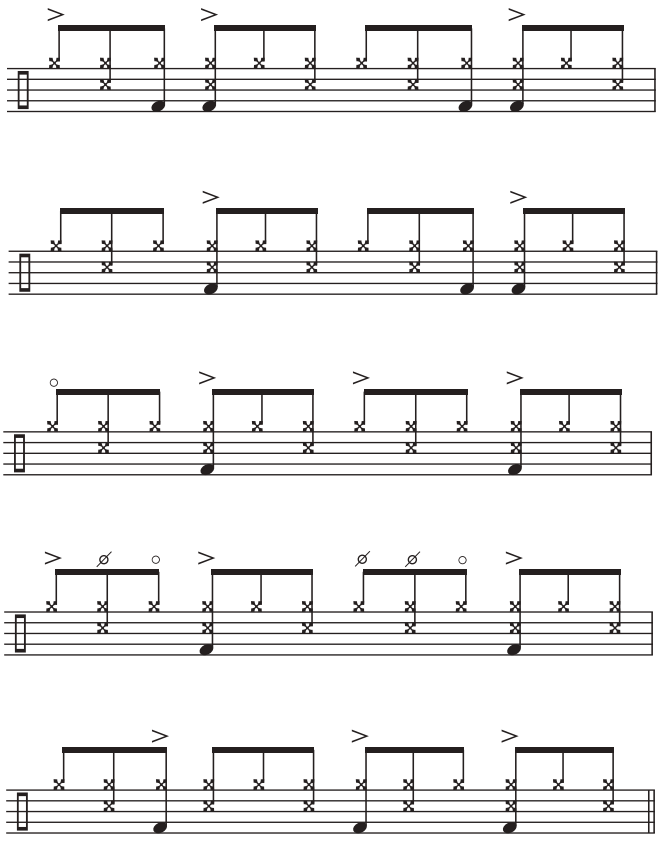
"Hot For Teacher"
Alex Van Halen, Van Halen, *1984*

Alex Van Halen opens this track by jamming on low toms and double kicks. Then, out of nowhere, he launches into this burning beat, setting the scene for his brother Eddie's guitar pyrotechnics. The double strokes on the cymbal bell and the offbeat crashes add to the impact of this classic double-bass shuffle.



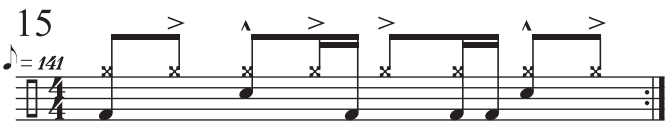
"Murder By Numbers"
Stewart Copeland, The Police, *Synchronicity*

Stewart's twisted 12/8 intro will throw you off if you focus too much on the offbeat rimclicks. The key to keeping your place is the reggae bass drum part. The hi-hat work on this is typically sweet, and a Copeland signature.



"When The Levy Breaks"
John Bonham, Led Zeppelin, *IV*

We end where we began, with a classic John Bonham opening groove. This pattern is one of the most sampled of all drum intros. Bonham's big and powerful drums sound as if they're echoing down the side of a mountain. In fact, the slap echo is so extreme that you almost have to play two 16th notes on the first beat to re-create it. Of course, the awesome drum sound would amount to nothing without Bonham's impeccable feel.



You can contact **Ed Breckenfeld** through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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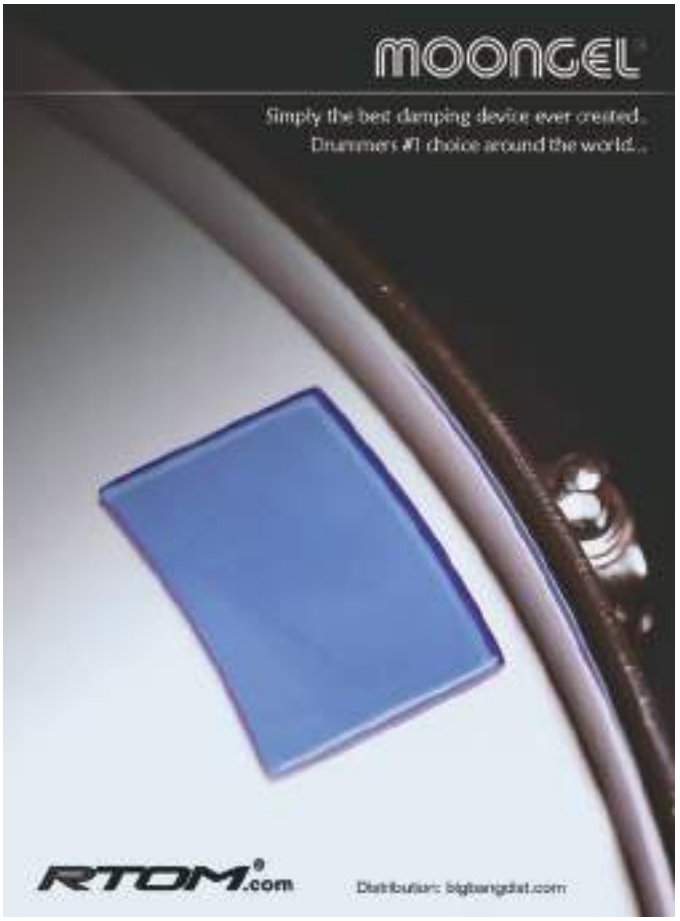


Mike Stern

Guitar Giant

by Ken Micallef

For twenty years, guitarist Mike Stern has held down a house gig at Greenwich Village's 55 Bar, home to some of the hottest improvising in Manhattan. Fans come from around the world to see Stern run his band through the changes (both jazz standards and originals), with the guitarist raising the intensity levels from simmering to explosive to nearly *implosive* on his ubiquitous Fender Telecaster. Stern lets it all hang out, and his weekly performances (when he's not touring the world) are a public view into what can be a secret process.

Stern has employed some of the greatest drummers in the land on his records and at the 55 Bar. As regular visitors can attest, the club gigs are down and dirty performances where the musicians are encouraged to empty their brains and expand their senses. Mike Stern expects his musicians to run the well dry.

Ever since he played with Miles Davis in the early 1980s, Mike Stern has attracted the cream of the percussive crop: Al Foster, Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette, Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, Lionel Cordew, Peter Erskine, Richie Morales, and Kim Thompson. Stern has very definite ideas about what he wants in a drummer. These ideas are well represented on his thirteenth album, *Who Let The Cats Out?* (featuring Thompson and Weckl).

"For my band, I like people who have a really good jazz conception," Stern says, "and who are into Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Jack DeJohnette, and Roy Haynes. They have to swing their asses off. And they need to rock their asses off too, and play the heck out of a blues shuffle. I began listening to rock and blues in the '60s. I was into B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, and Eric Clapton with Cream. A few years later, I got into jazz. I was into Wes Montgomery, Jim Hall, John Coltrane, and Sonny Rollins. So a drummer has to be versatile on my gig.

"I like when people can play with the time and make it sound fluid," Stern continues. "The drummer is most important for that, as well as for dynamics. I need drummers who can cover a lot of ground—and I don't mean play it by rote. They have to *live* it."

Stern's weekly 55 Bar gigs are, for all intents and purposes, very high-level jam sessions. Is there an audition process for this venerable gig? "Most of the time I know the cats by reputation," Stern replies. "Then we just do a gig. I've been playing the 55 Bar for years, every Monday and Wednesday. I play with cats there and see where they're at. Usually, when you hear about a great drummer in New York, you know if you're going to be able to deal with the cat."

Dennis Chambers
Is What It Is, Jigsaw, Between The Lines, Play, Voices, These Times

Dennis plays on the *Mike Stern Live The Paris Concert* DVD, with Richard Bona [bass] and Bob Franceschini [saxophones]. He's just great on that. Although jazz isn't the first thing people think of when Dennis is mentioned, he is a phenomenal player in that style. He can play an Elvin kind of feeling on a small kit—which not a lot of people have heard. And when he just goes for it, he's really in there. Dennis's groove is fat as hell, even in a duo setting. Of course, he has shown that on many records.

Billy Cobham *Glass Menagerie* (Cobham)

Cobham is a real innovator, and a lot of the people I'm talking about got a lot from him. And they're proud to admit it. Dennis certainly checked out Billy—who, by the way, is also a great swing player. After he played with [legendary jazz bassist] Ron Carter, Ron said Billy was great, and that is high praise.

Billy knows how to build behind a soloist. He used to do the double bass thing, but he really didn't need it. He has such great chops, he could do it all with one bass drum.

Lionel Cordew (live)

Lionel Cordew is underrated—and beautiful. He has an amazing time feel. Sometimes I like things to push a little; it doesn't have to be metronomic. Sometimes we'll play twenty-minute tunes that start out swinging and end up rocking. I like drummers who can feel that. Lionel can sound like he's playing the fattest groove, even if the tempo goes up a little. He doesn't just sit on it like a drum machine, he goes with the soloist. That gives the solo some energy, but it still sounds like it's swinging or rocking.

Lionel has an amazing pocket. He's very strong in a supportive role, and he knows how to have a dialog. I get off so much on dialog from the drums. We might start out playing the tune with a melody, and by the time we get to the blowing we're totally improvising.

Jack DeJohnette
Give And Take

Jack plays his ass off on *Give And Take*, which we did with [bassist] John Patitucci. On that record, a lot of times Jack is just playing around the time that John and I set up. I guess he figured, "You have the time; let me play some stuff around it." He'd lock onto the time and then just play over it. He would play with the soloist, against the soloist...he just bubbles right along.

Peter Erskine *Time In Place*

Peter says his main goal as a drummer is to make soloists sound as good as they possibly can. He plays some incredibly interesting stuff, and the dynamics and time feel are beautiful. That is how Peter comes to the instrument: He plays great solos, but his main priority is to support the music around him. I love that about him.

Al Foster
Standards, We Want Miles, Man With The Horn, Star People (all with Miles Davis)

Miles Davis's genius wasn't cerebral, it was really gut-level. When he heard something and he dug it, he didn't question it. He heard Marcus Miller, and he already knew Al Foster, so he hired Marcus and Al to be in his band. You wouldn't typically take Al Foster, who's really a jazz drummer, and Marcus Miller, who's really a funk bass player, and say, "Those guys are going to work great together." But when you hear them deal, they're swinging their asses off.

Actually, Al always swings. Even if he's playing a rock groove, it's a *swinging* rock groove. Recently, someone sent me an old tape of a gig in 1981. It begins with the drums playing a rock groove, and I thought it was John Bonham. But it's Al.

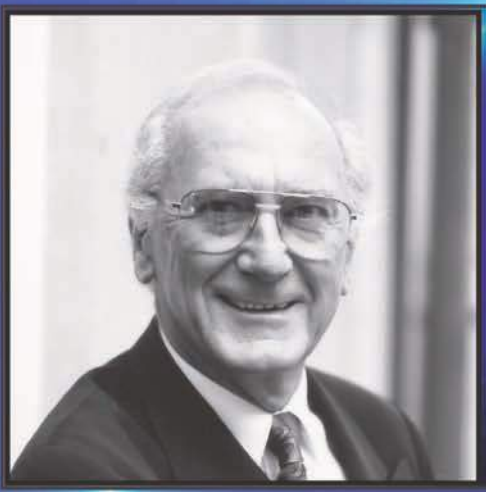
Al is also a very delicate, sensitive jazz player, in that he can anticipate what the soloist is doing. He can play with or against that soloist, or he can have a dialog. Al is the king of that stuff. You might get different, but you can't get better than Al Foster. He is one of the greatest jazz drummers of all time. Even Sonny Rollins said that. And his rock stuff is like the '60s: He can get that stuff rocking like crazy, really greasy and on the ground.

Richie Morales (live)

Richie is a Puerto Rican cat, so he has a lot of Latin stuff. But he's also a great jazz player and a strong rock player. His stuff can sound greasier than any other drummer I've played with. His rock playing has just

Time In Place
Stern On The Human Element

I don't think the way players interpret time has really changed from the days of Miles. Today there are drum machines and Pro Tools, and that technology is useful. But it can also take away a certain human element that you want. If a drummer is playing too much like a drum machine, that's not the drummer I'm looking for. I like drummers to be supportive and keep the time in the ballpark, but I don't mind if the time floats a little with the soloist. I don't mean huge tempo swings, but if it pushes a littlebit and everyone is excited, that's fine.



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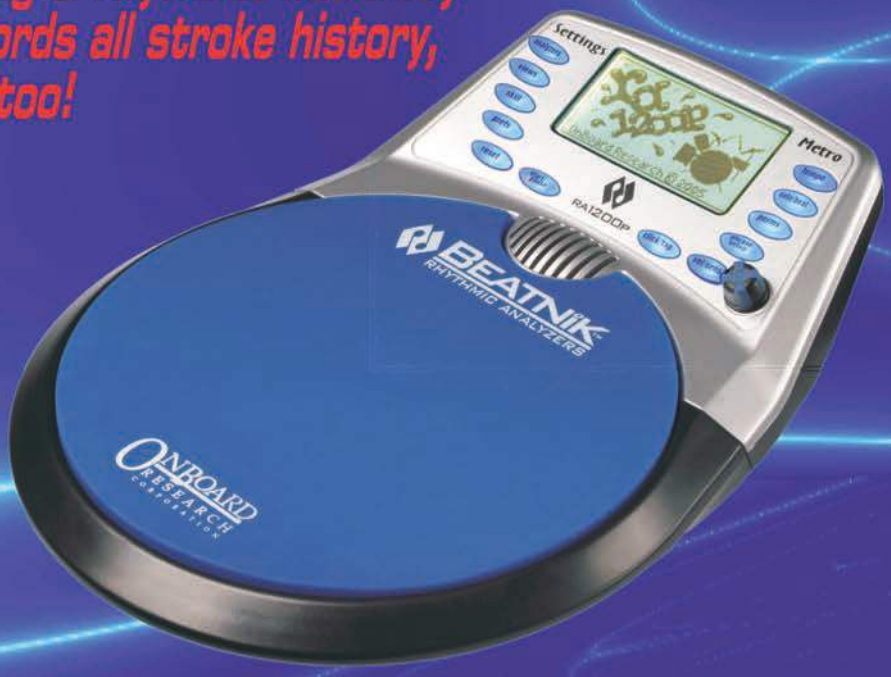

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Mike Stern

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For me, Richie's rock groove is the kind of thing that all drummers appreciate, 'cause he has this natural thing happening. It's not perfect technique, it's gritty. He makes mistakes, and he just rolls with them. I like drummers who do that. I want it human. I want drummers to loosen up on my gig.

Kim Thompson
Who Let The Cats Out?

Kim can cover a lot of music from the heart. She is a terrific jazz player, and she's very creative. Kim is musically into a lot of styles, so she can play the stuff that I want her to play. If I'm doing a funk groove, she's in there, and if I'm swinging, she definitely can do that. She can also play a ballad beautifully. You can feel her heart and soul.

Dave Weckl
Upside Downside, Between The Lines, Who Let The Cats Out?

Dennis Chambers said that in my band he really heard Weckl's looseness, which I think is his best stuff. Weckl can follow a solo as well as anyone I've ever played with, and that's saying a lot. And he can really develop with the solo, so we stretch.

Weckl can also play an arrangement amazingly well. He didn't even rehearse the tune for the new album. He heard the demo, learned the music, and then played it as though he had written it.

Dave is one of the funkiest guys, but he is very elegant as well—and extremely sensitive. Dave and Dennis can play real strong funk and rock grooves, but they are incredibly sensitive players as well. There is a difference in time feel between Dave and Dennis, the crux of which is that sometimes Dave feels things in more of a half-time way. Dennis may feel it more as a double-time feel. But they both sound very loose. They have slightly different feels, but they are both very precise, very strong time players. I'm just glad to be in the band with these guys.

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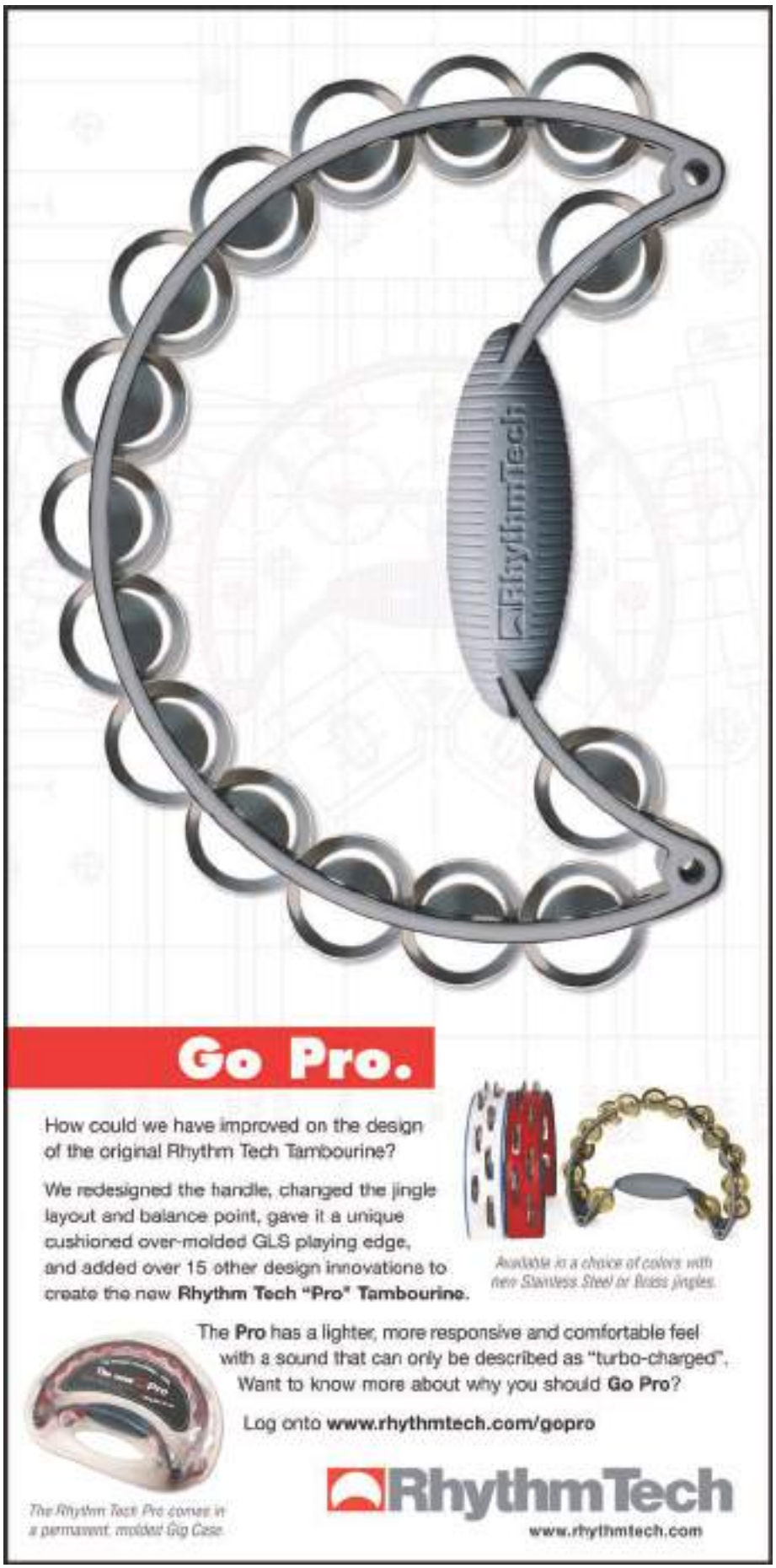
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Elvin On The Road

A Drum Tech's Memories

by James Bennington

It was 2000, and I was working as drum tech for The Elvin Jones Jazz Machine. Aside from the legendary drummer and his wife Keiko, the band featured saxophone, trumpet, piano, and bass. We were on a charter bus driving from Carmel, California to San Francisco. Elvin and Keiko usually traveled separately from the rest of the group, and stayed in a different hotel. However, on this late-night drive they sat up front, with the rest of the group filling in the seats behind, and me in the back.

Most of the time we flew from gig to gig. But this was a short, two-week tour of California. Our five-star hotel in Carmel was wonderful, and I enjoyed a steak dinner in the hotel restaurant in the late afternoon. When I saw Elvin and Keiko afterwards, they acted like proud grandparents, pleased that I'd eaten well. When they inquired about the rest of the group, I said that they'd mentioned taking advantage of the complimentary food in the lobby. Keiko responded emphatically, saying "Why!? Why!? James, I don't understand it! We pay them. They don't know how to live!" Elvin offered an unprintable translation of what "complimentary" really meant, then starting talking about "the flies hovering over everything."

After we had set up in the Carmel venue, the engineer asked for a soundcheck on the drums. Keiko sat down and confidently played a jagged jazz cymbal rhythm, with the hi-hat near 2 and 4. She hit the toms in descending order with single strokes, and ended with a few dubious eruptions from the snare drum—with the bass drum all the while chugging along on all four beats. After about ten seconds, she stopped suddenly, got up, and said, "That's it!" Naturally, the soundman told her that he needed more, to which she responded, "You have to learn. I've been doing this for twenty-five years all over the world. What have you been doing for twenty-five years?"

Hours later, during the band's first set, Elvin was soloing on a tune that Keiko had written for him, called "Mr. Jones." The band came in after Elvin had particularly nailed the melody. Elvin angrily accepted this, but as soon as the tune was over he had the guys backed against the wall. I could hear, "I'm serious, dammit!" and "I want to play too!" amidst the applause. I found out later that Elvin thought the band had cut him off.

Still later, backstage, Elvin's legs and feet were causing him severe pain. He started yelling at Keiko and everyone else to get away from him. Keiko asked me to put out juice, cups, and ice for the band, but Elvin roared at me, "Get outta here! This ain't a @&*+ cafeteria!" When the club owner poked his head in the door to check in, Elvin said loudly, "And we're gonna take a *real* intermission! Not no ten or fifteen minutes!"

As usual, though, Elvin's animosity didn't last long. On the second set, he featured the entire group on a romping version of Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing," during which he was all smiles.

Elvin The Professor

Many times, when I was just going about my job, I'd walk into situations where Elvin was telling someone about the art form called jazz, or the history of it. On one occasion, Elvin was telling his young bassist about time being elastic, and how it should be able to speed up or slow down as naturally as possible. He said that it was not so much about the "1" as it was about playing together—at which point he moved his relaxed hands up and down in unison. On another occasion, Elvin confided to me that on ballads or slow to medium tempos in 4/4 meter he would often think and phrase in 6/4 time: 1, 2, 3 on the snare, 4 on the hi-hat, 5 on the snare, and 6 on the bass drum. This was illustrated by the many times when Elvin would slide

Courtesy Of Yamaha

into the last beat on the bass drum with a four-stroke roll.

Elvin The Student

In a rare post-show interview Elvin once gave in San Francisco, he said that Art Blakey was his strongest influence. It's also easy to hear the influences of Sid Catlett, Jo Jones, Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, and Roy Haynes—as well as Michigan country blues, Sousa marches, waltz time (3, 6, 9, and 12), and Western classical music.

Elvin's own interpretation of standards, as well as the variety of music in his repertoire—which ranged from forgotten showtunes to Japanese folk songs—was often churchlike and symphonic in its definitive approach. At clinics, Elvin often spoke about his youthful aspirations to be a percussionist in the New York Philharmonic.

When listening to Elvin's playing—especially his early recordings—it's clear that much of his style and rhythms were strongly influenced by military drumming and marching band music. This isn't surprising, since Elvin was a great fan of John Phillip Sousa: boom boom *roll*, boom boom *roll*. I remember several occasions on the road when Elvin related how excited he was as a boy when the circus came through his home of Pontiac, Michigan, and how he would follow the musicians around (with his mother chasing after him).

Elvin The Innovator

For most of my tours with the Jazz Machine, Elvin closed out the night with "It Don't Mean A Thing..."—turning it into a march, a shuffle, a ballad, a waltz, a Basie tune led by the softest ticking of the hi-hat, or a classical tune with a twelve-piece African drum choir behind it. Even in places that seemed uncountable (like the tag at the end), when the group was playing à la Cecil Taylor, you could almost see the Duke himself standing there, smiling and holding sheet music for everyone.

Elvin also employed real harmonics on the drumset, playing careful rhythmic combinations on his toms, snare, and riveted cymbals. He equated these to the grease in a frying pan, waiting for an egg or a chop. He used to say that if you were a chef, the snare drum would be a staple, like salt or pepper.

Elvin The Showman

One evening in Nashville, Tennessee, Elvin and the band were to perform in a very nice restaurant. Everyone in the full house was enjoying dinner, talking, and generally having a good time. After Elvin and the group were introduced, Elvin must have sensed something in the atmosphere. Instead of opening up with a customary burner, like "E.J's Blues," he called the medium-tempo "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise," starting out on brushes.

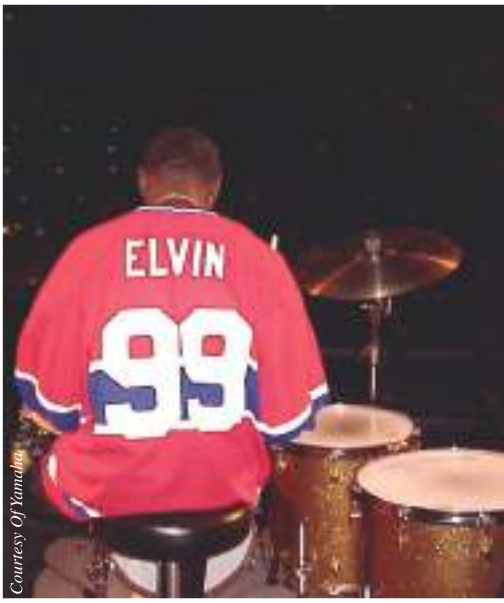
It was "The Elvin Jones Jazz Machine Plays Supperclub"—Elvin's version of supperclub, that is, replete with mallets, thundering rolls that made folks come out of their seats, funky slapping brushes, and Elvin's subtle and dynamic way of accompanying and creating along with the soloist. That particular opening left a lasting impression on me. After returning home, I approached my own drumming jobs in the same way, easing into the night (and the music).

When Elvin played his second set that evening in Nashville, everyone was ready and waiting for him to let loose his energy and fire. And they weren't disappointed, as the legend that was Elvin Jones came to the fore. There were many memorable moments like this...many separate instances that make up one unified collage of what Elvin did and how he lived his life.

Back On The Bus

On the bus late that night leaving Carmel, everyone was calm and thoughtful. One of the guys brought out a video documentary on Charlie Parker. Watching this with Elvin was a unique experience. There, in the intimate rolling theater, we all watched for when he might laugh or comment on something. We knew that Elvin had been around during the Golden Era of jazz, and that what was a great education for us was a reminiscence for him.

When the film ended, Elvin said, very humbly, "Thank you." It remained quiet on the bus until we reached our destination. As we got off, unloading our gear and saying our goodnights, everyone was calling him "Mr. Jones" again.



Courtesy Of Yamaha

James Bennington is a jazz drummer and freelance writer based in Chicago. For more info, go to www.benningtonjazz.com.

The Weekend Warrior

Balancing Drumming With Family And Career

by Chris Duignan

You didn't make the decision to become a drummer. You were born to it. The first time you sat down at a kit and whapped the snare drum, a voice inside you said, "This is what you are meant to do. It's your fate, your dharma." From that moment, you knew you were a musician.

But life happens. You graduated school, got a haircut, and adopted the adult role: career, family, responsibilities. But while your early fantasies of drumming fame and fortune have begun to fade, your love of making music still remains. Is it possible, you ask yourself, to balance family and job responsibilities, while still honoring the drumming that is such a fundamental part of who you are?

The answer is an emphatic *yes*. You can keep doing what you love—playing drums with a high level of musicianship—while fulfilling your responsibilities to those who depend on you.

The Job And Drumming

Here's some good news: Devoting time to musical performance may actually help improve your on-the-job performance. Many experts in the field of work and leisure believe that engaging in a creative activity, such as playing an instrument in a band, actually helps make you better at your job. Not only does playing rejuvenate you, but the same creativity you bring to a gig can often manifest itself as creative thinking in the workplace. The accumulated tension and stress of the workweek is reduced when you perform, resulting in a happier, more relaxed work experience. Feeling that your potential is being fulfilled on a creative level can have a positive effect in *all* areas of your life—work and family included.

The question remains, "How do I strike a balance between my job, my family, and my drumming?" In order to answer this question, you need to perform a reality check on your drumming aspirations.

Chances are the Rolling Stones aren't going to ask you to sit in for Charlie Watts should he suddenly catch cold. Prince probably won't invite you to fill the drum chair on his next tour. That's perfectly okay, because you can still play drums at a level that will satisfy you, keep your audience entertained, and garner your bandmates' respect. All you have to do is adjust your goals to fit the life you've worked so hard to create.

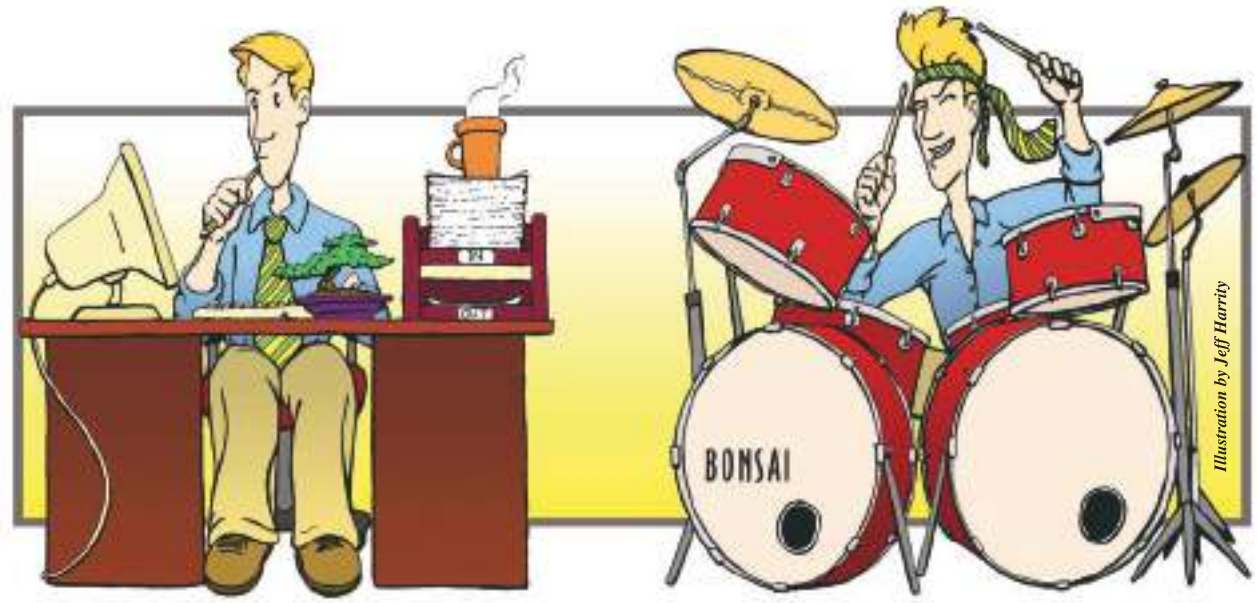


Illustration by Jeff Harrity

Feeling that your potential is being fulfilled on a creative level can have a positive effect in all areas of your life—work and family included.

Remember that the premise of this article is that while music is a labor of love for you, it is not your primary career. Your job pays the bills, keeps body and soul together, and supports your loved ones. At this juncture of your life, quitting that job to become a full-time musician is not a viable option. You can still have a blast performing the music you love—while supplementing your family income at the same time. But first you need to find the right playing situation.

The Club Band

Local live-music clubs are often derided by young bands seeking to establish a career. But they can be great venues for adult musicians looking to have some fun and bring in some additional income. Local club dates may not be quite the stadium rock gigs you envisioned in your formative years. But there are many venues out there that welcome mature, professional cover bands that come without rock-star attitudes. Not only do such clubs offer the weekend warrior the opportunity to express his or her creative side—you can probably slip in an original song or two every night—but the pay can come in very handy for the part-time musician with a day job and family obligations.

To shop these clubs as possible venues for your band, you'll need to put together a small press kit (a glossy group photo, a band biography, and a CD). Once you have such a kit that presents your look and sound in a professional manner, you'll be surprised at how many clubs will give you a shot. What with the additional income and the chance to rock out a bit, a club gig can make for a rewarding night's work.

The Wedding Band

Back in the day, the mere thought of playing weddings would send shivers up the spine of any musician seeking "street cred." But times have changed. Nowadays, wedding bands employ top-notch players who possess considerable chops earned through years of practice and playing. The resulting music is often first-rate.

Of course, the traditional wedding gig is not exactly rock 'n' roll. On the other hand, much of the music is, in fact, the rock, hip-hop, and pop music that peals from your car radio, and it's performed with a great deal of passion and musicianship. Just be advised that you'll need to leave the rock attitude and wardrobe at home with the smoke machine. The job is all about the happy couple, their relatives, and their friends. That probably means playing types of music you might not have even *considered* performing in your younger days (like waltzes, fox trots, rumbas, and ethnic favorites). But relax. You'll have a blast entertaining the crowd. After all, Aunt Sophie wants to kick her heels up on the dance floor too, and the smile on her face as she does will make your night.

The pay at the end of the show will also add to the enjoyment of your night, as it will to your bank balance. A good wedding band can command quite a generous fee. Though you may have to tone down your rock persona for the night, the money you make from wedding gigs can make a serious contribution to your family's finances.

The Family Shares In The Fun

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Weekend Warrior

music with your spouse and kids (or with your significant other) is a wonderful way of bringing you closer together, as well as providing an enjoyable time for everyone. Granted, some private gigs may prohibit guests, and club dates are out of the question for children. Still, with a little effort, you can find family-friendly events to play that the people in your life will really enjoy going to. They'll get to see you in your element, on stage, displaying the talent you've honed from years of playing.

Does your town sponsor summer concerts in the park or street fairs that feature live music? These are perfect gigs to invite your family and friends to, in order to share a day together and have some fun. How about dances put on by civic associations? Or church socials? Contact your local chamber of commerce, as well as church and civic groups, for information on how you can perform at these family-friendly shows.

How To Hook Up With A Band

Maybe you've been out of a band situation for a while, and you want to reconnect. How do you find musicians who want what you want, which is to play in a high-quality group without making a full-time career out of it? Web sites such as www.themode.com and www.gigfinder.com can help you check out bands in your area that are looking for musicians, or musicians who are looking to hook up with bands. These sites group their listings by area code or town, so if you do find a band that interests you, you won't have to travel to the next state to see if you're a match.

Besides the Internet, there are the old reliable methods for seeking out musicians. Post an ad in the local music store. Register with entertainment companies that handle weddings. (Again, have your press kit ready.) Check out the ads in your local free entertainment newspapers. Last, but not least, contact musicians you've played with in the past. Chances are, some of them are still playing and may need your services, or may know of other musicians who might. Playing situations are out there. You just need to seek them out and make the necessary connections.

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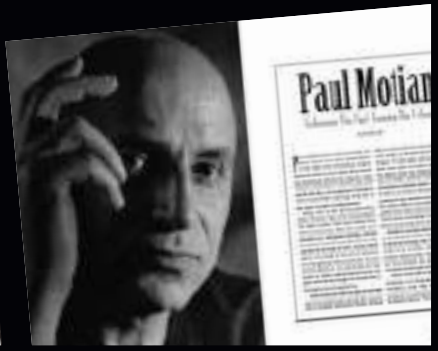

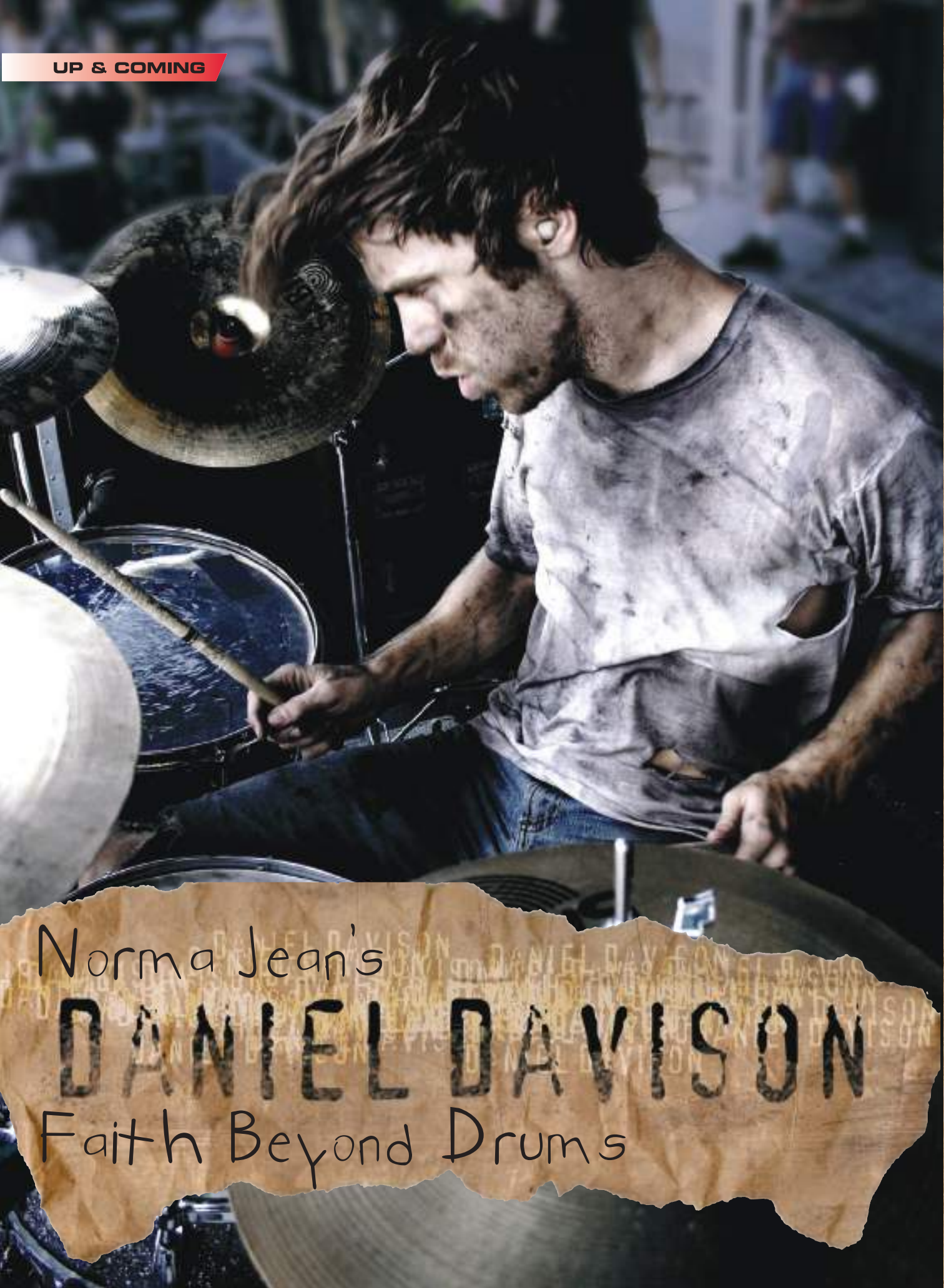

Norma Jean's DANIEL DAVISON

Faith Beyond Drums

COMBINING SOLID TECHNIQUE WITH SUBTLE, CREATIVE IDEAS, DANIEL DAVISON IS THE PERFECT FIT FOR HOT METAL/MATH-CORE BAND NORMA JEAN.

"When I'm playing, I want it to be worship to God," says Norma Jean drummer Daniel Davison. "Whether our words are directly worshipful or not, my act of playing the drums is."

Atlanta's Norma Jean is a Christian metal-core band that's attracting a feverish following among Christians and non-Christians alike in the extreme music scene. On the group's new album, *Redeemer*, which was produced by Ross Robinson [Korn, Limp Bizkit], Davison's rhythmic offerings are intensely heavy, emotionally jarring, and, more than ever, steeped in groove. He's fast and powerful, and his bass drum technique is impressive.

That said, Davison's playing is also a bit more straightforward on the new record than on the band's previous release, 2005's *Oh God, The Aftermath*. "The last record was a lot more chaotic," Davison admits. "The new one is not as complex as far as song structures go. But there's a lot more melody. This record is more mature than anything we've done before."

Of course, Davison's drumming is still filled with plenty of noisy, colorful creativity. Take "The End Of All Things Will Be Televised," for example, a brain-rattling number that, according to Davison, "Has weird time signatures and memorization-type stuff—not patterns necessarily but random parts I had to memorize." That song also features percussion from Matt Putnam, brother of Norma Jean singer Cory Brandan (Putnam).

Speaking of percussion, Davison brought anything he could think of into the studio that could be "banged on" for the recording of *Redeemer*—tambourines, bells, stairway handrails.... "My brother-in-law is actually coming to help play the percussion parts on our upcoming headlining tour," Davison says. "He and I have been going out to junkyards looking for random items to play."

STORY BY JEFF PERLAH * PHOTOS BY TES DAVISON

MD: Besides "The End Of All Things," what other tune on the record are you crazy about from a drumming standpoint?
Daniel: I really like the first song on the record, "A Grand Theme For A Color Film." It's a really energetic, fun song to play.
MD: There's certainly a lot of emotion in your playing.
Daniel: That's cool, because that's what I always want to portray. I don't really get into the super-technical players. I can appreciate that they're fast, but it's not satisfying to me musically. I like simple and *creative* drummers.

A big inspiration for me in that department is Abe Cunningham of The Deftones. None of his stuff is super over-the-top, but it's just creative and solid. John Stanier, who played with Helmet and Tomahawk, is the same way: really solid, groove-oriented, and creative.
MD: When did you start playing drums?
Daniel: I was thirteen when I got my first kit. I had previously wanted to play guitar; I don't know what made me switch to drums. But my mom ended up getting me my first kit for my birthday. I started playing every day. I basically learned how to play to Helmet songs.

Before I had my kit, I had acquired a pair of drumsticks that I'd use to air drum to Helmet records. Then when I got my kit, I could already kind of play. I do play guitar now, too. I help write a lot of our songs.

Unsane is another big influence on me. Maybe the dirtiness and rawness that's in our music could be attributed to how much we like that band. Everything they've done is just super-dirty and gritty. That's something we've always wanted to achieve.
MD: Let's hear about your gear.
Daniel: I just got a new kit a few months back, and I'm lovin' it. I use a Gretsch Renown kit. It has a 10", 12", and 16" toms, a 7x14 maple snare, and a 22" kick. It has a silver sparkle finish. And I play Neil Peart Signature sticks from Pro-Mark.
MD: Do you use a double pedel?
Daniel: Yes, a Tama Iron Cobra, which I use sparingly.
MD: What about your cymbal setup?
Daniel: I use Sabian. It's pretty basic: two 19" crashes, an 18" China, and 14" hi-hats.
MD: You don't strike me as being gear-obsessed.
Daniel: No, not really. I love the drums that I play, but I don't go out and get all the new things. I have the basics and that's what I stick with.
MD: How do you position your drums?
Daniel: When people sit down at my kit, they almost always comment on how close together everything is. All my cymbals are low and everything is in easy reach. My toms are super close together, and my snare is pushed right up against my first tom. Nothing is spread out.
MD: The new record was produced by the legendary Ross Robinson. How did things go with him?
Daniel: It was amazing. I've wanted to work with him since I first started playing drums. I was about thirteen when I was first aware of him and the bands he was producing.
MD: How involved was he with your drumming?
Daniel: Ross came to Atlanta for a week during pre-production. I picked him up at his hotel and he came to our rehearsal. On the way, he told me, "Well, I'm here until next week for you. This is all about the drums. We're not gonna focus on anything else." He was talking about the record. "There's not

gonna be any triggers or samples. It's all gonna be you." That was kind of intimidating, because I didn't really know him that well.

It turned out to be an amazing week. Ross would stand right in front of my drums, with his leg against the kick, to see exactly what I was doing. We'd play a song two or three times, and maybe he would say, "Okay, do it again." We'd start again, and he'd stop me ten seconds in: "Okay, maybe try hitting the kick right under that snare." He had subtle suggestions that added more character to what I was playing. We went through every song that way.

MD: Where did you record your drum parts during pre-production?

Daniel: We did it at an old theater up in the mountains of northern California that had been converted into a studio. But instead of tracking my parts in a big, open area of the theater, he took us down to this basement room, which was a tiny little storage closet. Ross goes for a dry, natural sound. Like I said, there were no triggers or samples; it was a very organic, natural feel.

MD: Did you have any discussions with Ross about spirituality?

Daniel: I wouldn't say he's a Christian, but he's definitely a deeply spiritual guy, which was really cool. We would talk about our songs before we started tracking, about the lyrics and what they meant to us.

MD: Can you tell me more about how your spirituality affects your drumming? Or is it too personal a topic?

Daniel: It's not too personal to answer, but it's kind of *hard* to answer. I do feel that any talent I have is attributed to God giving it to me. I want to do the best I can with it. And I want it to be some sort of encouragement and inspiration to others, just like I've been inspired by bands.

MD: Let's switch from spirituality to physicality. You play hard. Do you do anything to stay in shape for drumming?

Daniel: I ride a road bike, and I try to use it more than I use my car. Last year I made a three hundred–mile bike trip with a couple of friends, which was really cool. My wife, Tes, and I ride bikes pretty much every day. We also run sometimes too.

> "I DON'T REALLY GET INTO SUPER TECHNICAL PLAYERS. I LIKE SIMPLE AND CREATIVE DRUMMERS."

Speaking of my wife, she's very talented. She took the photos of me for this feature. She's also my drum tech, and she does a really good job with it. It's nice because she gets to tour with us.

MD: You're inspiring a lot of young drummers now with your drumming. What advice can you give to beginners?

Daniel: Practice every day. When I first started, I would wake up in the morning before school and play, and then as soon as I got home from school I would play till I went to sleep. That's the kind of commitment you need to have.

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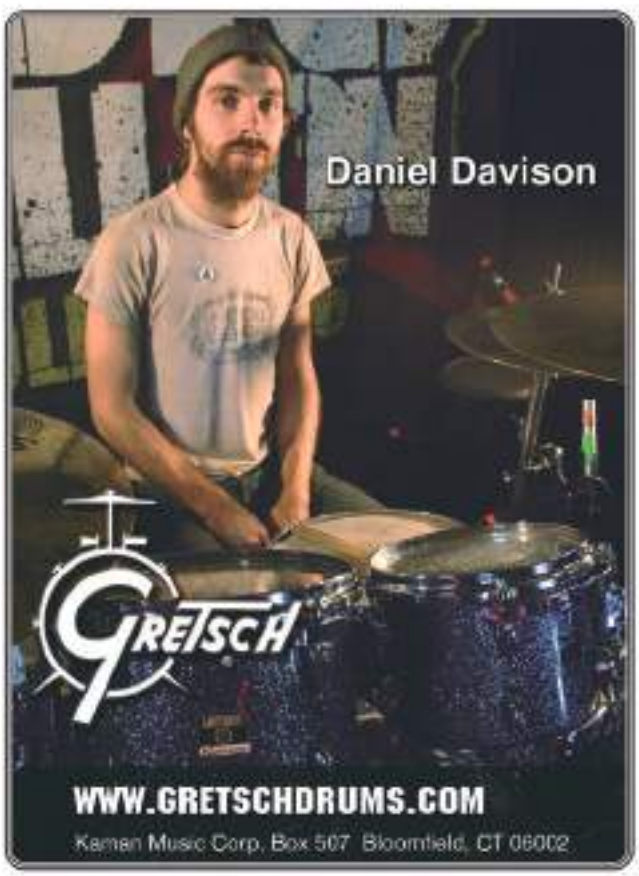


Factory Metal Percussion

Shaping Sounds In Steel

by Rick Van Horn

Every so often, a product comes along that catches the imagination of the drumming public. It becomes a "must-have" item that shows up on drumkits belonging to pros and non-pros alike.

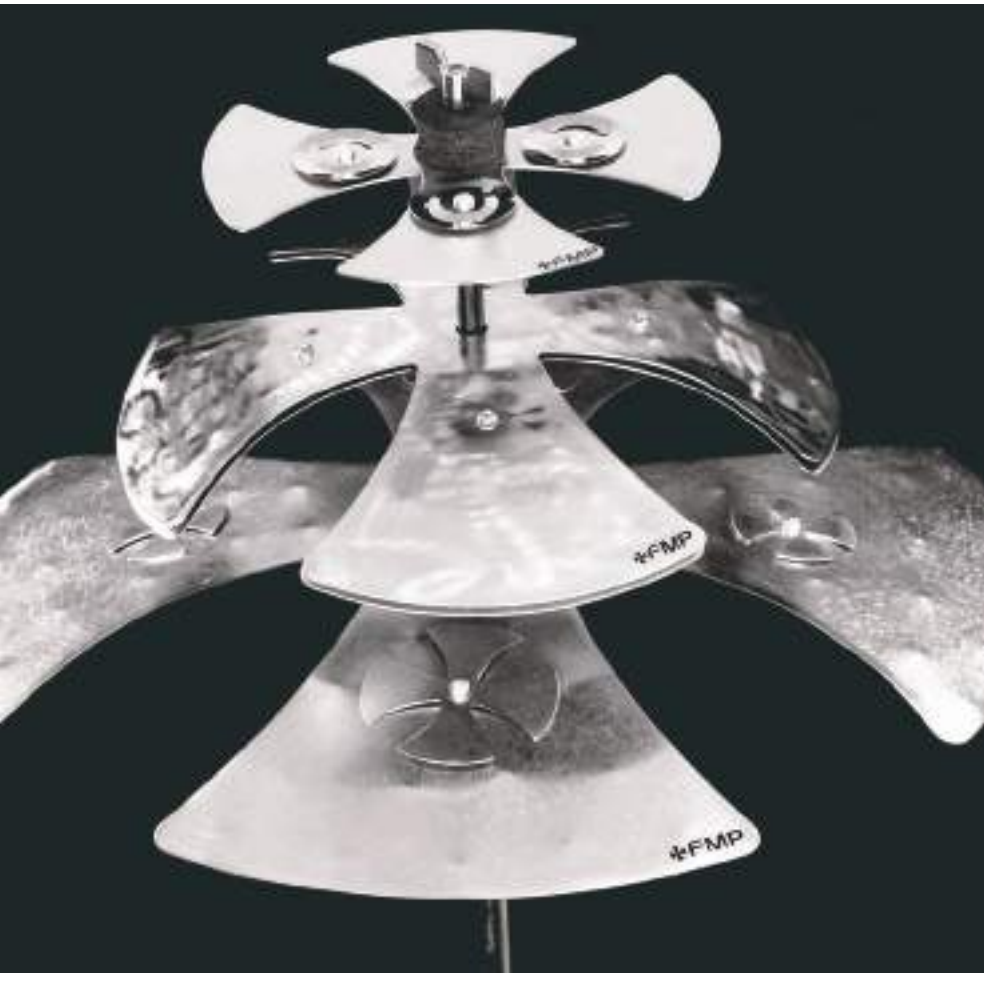
Factory Metal Percussion's entire *line* of products fits into this category. This young company's unique metal percussion instruments—with their distinctive shapes and original sounds—have taken the drumming world by storm. And at the eye of that storm is FMP creator Jim Anderson.

Sonic Exploration

Like so many other successful percussion innovators, Jim Anderson is a professional drummer who enjoyed a successful touring career. But these days Jim is dedicated to the creation of FMP instruments, which has basically put him in the role of...well...*blacksmith*. That's because all of FMP's products are created by shaping and modifying pieces of steel. Did Jim have any background in metal fabrication that led him to create these products?

"No, I didn't," he replies. "My interest was in trying to find sounds. I think the idea of working with steel shapes came about by my having a collection of every cymbal known to man. There was a certain point where I departed from traditional cymbal sounds, looking for something different. I went to a metal fabrication shop in Santa Ana, California, and just started experimenting. At first I made some round disks that, frankly, didn't sound great. Then I tried different shapes, and I found several that had a whole spectrum of overtones that really got me excited."

Jim's wife, Kristen, who is his partner in FMP, interjects, "Jim, by nature, is a super-creative person who's constantly seeking new things to play on. So FMP isn't something that happened just like that. It's been a long process of seeking new sounds from every source you can imagine."



In The Beginning

Since Jim's initial inspiration for new instruments came from his cymbal collection, it's not surprising that the first FMP product was a big, flat, steel disk that looked pretty cymbal-like. "I experimented with different thicknesses," says Jim. "Thick disks didn't sound very good, but as they got thinner and thinner, they started developing certain qualities reminiscent of old, vintage cymbals. Eventually we arrived at the present thickness, which is about .030". That became the Gothic Radius. We loved the sound, but we realized that it did look somewhat like a not-quite-cymbal, which people might have reservations about. So we went back to the thicker material and started thinking about other shapes."

The "other shapes"—which largely define Factory Metal's image—came at the suggestion of Jim's teenage son, Matt. "Matt rides in motocross races here in California," Jim explains. "The Maltese cross and related imagery is very popular among motocross riders. So Matt suggested that I make an instrument in the Maltese cross shape. Matt's idea

TEAM FACTORY METAL

Here's an overview of the FMP product line.

Celtic Bells

Celtic Bells radiate a pure bell tone with an edgy metallic bite. Each Bell comes with interchangeable Sizzlers and Jinglers to create a multitude of specialized sound effects. Different-sized Bells can be stacked on cymbal stackers to create a variety of melodic sound layers. Sizes include 6", 8", 10", and 12".

Gothic Radius

The Gothic Radius is a special-effects disk that can be played in the manner of a ride or crash cymbal, but offers totally different sonic response. It can produce a very clear stick-tip sound that cuts through its dark low-end simmer. It can also produce an edge "wobble" for an eerie effect. Areas of the surface can be hammered in small increments to customize bright crash areas and pitchy sound zones, and Sizzlers can be added for a smooth "riser" effect. Sizes include 20", 22", 23", and 26".

Cross Benderz

Cross Benderz feature a flexible metal alloy that can be hand-bent for a wide variety of custom sound applications. They deliver an explosive metallic attack with a fast decay. The cross design radiates up to four different tonal centers at the same time for multiple pitch options. The Benderz can be stacked for playing multi-tonal grooves with extra visual impact. Holes are included for attaching FX Shrapnel. Sizes include 18", 20", and 23".

Vertical China

These metallic alloy slabs generate trashy pang sounds, which can be modulated by banding them with one hand while playing with the other. They can be grouped by size in sets of three for large industrial sound effects. They can also be shaped by hand-bending to different angles for unique percussive variations. Holes are included for attaching FX Shrapnel. Sizes include 22", 33", and 44".

Cross Crasherz

Cross Crasherz hold four jingles between two thin metal crosses for a unique white-noise effect. Decay and pitch can be adjusted by tightening or loosening the cross plate tension. Different sizes can be combined on cymbal stackers for cutting multi-layered accents. Sizes include 6", 8", 10", and 12".

Hat Crasherz

Hat Crasherz combine one Cross Crasher and one specially shaped Celtic Bell to create a versatile hi-hat style instrument. The Crasher and the Bell can be interchanged between the top and bottom position for different sticking effects. Jinglers or Sizzlers can be added to the Bell for even more sonic variety.

Hi-Hat Jingler

With fully adjustable jingles that open and close, the 4" Hi-Hat Jingler's "ching" won't overpower the hi-hat's "chick." The Jingler attaches to the hi-hat rod with an easy-on/easy-off mounting system, or can be attached to the hi-hat clutch for permanent applications.

FX Shrapnel

FX Shrapnel provides additional sound options for players to customize metallic pitch and effects. Shrapnel connects to all FMP products that feature appropriate "Bullet Holes." Packs of four are available in Jinglar, Cross, and Starz shapes.

Sound samples of Factory Metal Percussion products are available at www.factorymetalpercussion.com.

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Factory Metal Percussion

Jim Anderson brings his drumming experience to the creation of new FMP products.

became our Celtic Bells."

The motocross connection also inspired the brand name for the new products. "Motocross features factory teams for all the big brands," Jim explains. "There's Team Factory Yamaha, Team Factory Kawasaki, and so forth. We liked the idea of that 'team factory' connection. So that led us to come up with Factory Metal Percussion, thinking that players who used our products would consider themselves part of Team Factory Metal."

Kristen Anderson adds, "Jim also tried lots of other shapes—different circles, squares, and oblongs. We were a little concerned about the Maltese cross shape being perceived as just trendy, rather than as musically valid. But the fact is, that shape creates the best sound."

Of course, it's pretty cool to be trendy *and* musical at the same time. According to Jim, "At FMP's first NAMM show, in 2003, there was a lot of 'What's this all about?' By the 2006 show, we had a substantial endorser list, and even more people were coming to our booth and saying, 'Give me one of those.'"

So what's the reason for the unprecedented response to FMP's instruments? "I think maybe it's the initial shock of seeing our stuff," Jim replies. "People look at the various shapes, and their first response is, 'Wow...what *are* those?" It raises curiosity right off the bat. And then, when they actually play the instruments, they go, '*Whoa*.' We've seen a lot of 'ah-ha' experiences, where people have immediately thought of where and how they could use our stuff. Half the time, they want one of each. So 'energy' and 'excitement' are the words I'd use to describe what happens to someone during their initial encounter with our products. I recently got an email from Vinnie Colaiuta, saying, 'I have things on top of things, I have things stacked, I have things under things.... It's a potpourri of new sounds that you have here, and I like all of them.'"

Creating Sounds

All FMP products are made from industrial alloy steel. They differ in shape, size, and thickness, in order to create a variety of sounds, volume, and sustain.

The basic shape for each instrument is cut by an outside laser-cutting operation. The cut pieces are then shipped to Jim's shop, where they undergo a variety of

machining operations, including bending, hammering, grinding, and buffing. Later, some components are combined, fitted with sizzlers or jingles, and bolted together to create Cross Crashers and other specialty products.

Innovation isn't easy. How does Jim come up with designs for new FMP instruments? "I usually start with just a rough idea," he replies. "I'll prototype a design and then study what it does. I don't get invested in what I *thought* it was going to do nearly as much as notice what it *is* doing. That helps me decide where to go with it next. If it's making a rattling sound, I start to think about how to increase that sound. It's a process of evolution that has to do with experimentation and exploration. If you start out saying, 'I'm going to make this sound,' you're probably not going to get it. Instead, just say, 'See that there? *That's* the new product."

Tweak-It-Yourself Instruments

Another attraction of FMP products is that drummers and percussionists can tailor the instruments to their own personal needs or desires. As Jim puts it, "Once people have an FMP instrument, they realize it's something they can adapt for themselves. They can change the hammering, or rebend it, whereas they'd be petrified of doing anything like that on a cymbal or a drum. At the very least, they can add or remove our little Jinglers and Sizzlers—or our new FX Shrapnel shapes—to change the sound. An FMP instrument is not mysterious or hi-tech. It's a piece of steel. And it's not that expensive."

Jim touts the ease with which such transformations can take place. "I was demonstrating a Gothic Radius to one drummer, and he told me that it was way too quiet. I told him that I could make it so loud that it would hurt his ears. Then I bent it into a dome shape, and it sounded like a huge, super-loud industrial cowbell. It was the same instrument, but it had been transformed.

"Another drummer we know had an idea for reversible hi-hats, using a Celtic Bell and a Cross Crasher," Jim continues. "Depending on which one you use on the top or bottom, you get a completely different 'hi-hat' sound, and completely different sticking sounds. With the Bell on top, it becomes more of a tool for a rock kit. With the Cross Crasher on top, it's more fusion-esque or like a Latin percussion sound. So now we're offering our Hat Crashers with that configuration."

Some of Jim's experiments involve special pinpoint hammering.

Substantial hand-crafting goes into every FMP product.

Building The Team

The Factory Metal artist team began with Jerry Marotta. "Jerry was our very first endorser," says Jim Anderson. "He came to our booth at the 2003 NAMM show, and he stayed there for the next half hour. He had an unusual Native American–style Taos drumset, and he was looking for something equally different in the way of metallic sounds.

"Will Calhoun joined us that same year," Jim continues, "and Luis Conte came on shortly thereafter. Two months later, Gary Novak picked up some of our stuff at the Hollywood Drum Show. When I emailed him a little later to ask if he'd had a chance to try the instruments, he told me that he'd already used them on two or three movie soundtracks. And then The Blue Man Group started playing our stuff in their Vegas show, as well as in the 2005 animated feature *Robots*. Richie Garcia played them on that same soundtrack.

"From there," Jim goes on, "things just started snowballing. Our artist list now includes Vinnie Colaiuta, Tommy Lee, Terry Bozzio, Rick Allen, Keith Carlock, Omar Hakim, Jojo Mayer, Gary Novak, Tom Brechtlein, Gregg Bissonette, Curt Bisquera, Stanton Moore, Thomas Lang, and about thirty more top artists. Aaron Spears, Teddy Campbell, and Gerald Heyward were playing our stuff at the MD Festival this past September. Horacio Hernandez and other Latin-style players—who put percussion on their kits anyway—are just jumping all over our stuff."

Some heavy-hitting rock drummers have also come into the FMP camp, including Kenny Aronoff, Jason Bittner of Shadows Fall, David Silveria of Korn, and Fritz Lewak with Melissa Etheridge. Says Jim, "You might think these rock guys would beat the stuff to death. But they tend to combine things, like putting a Cross Bender on top of a Cross Crasher on top of a Gothic Radius. All of a sudden, they have this multi-layered instrument that's able to withstand the bashing."

Jim uses the experience of two endorsers to illustrate the durability of FMP instruments. "Gerald Heyward has 10" and 12" Cross Crasherz. He told us that what he likes about them is that he can beat the tar out of them, and if they get bent at all he can just bend them right back. And then there are the guys in Street Drum Corps. They take our products and throw them down on stage and jump on them for their show. Then they have their 18-wheel touring trucks run over them to flatten them back out for the next show. That's not something you're going to do with your vintage China cymbal."

A Good Problem

Business has been so good for Factory Metal Percussion over the past couple of years that Jim and his small crew are hard pressed to keep up with the orders. "We've been thrust into the big leagues very quickly," Jim comments. "In a sense, that's a good problem to have...but it's still a problem. When you're growing a business, and it wants to grow faster than you're letting it, that's not healthy. And this thing wants to grow *now*."

RECORDINGS

Ratings Scale
- ★★★★★ Classic
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Fair
- ★ Poor

FRANCISCO MELA
MELAO

★★★★

On his debut as a leader, Francisco Mela makes his bid as a rising heavyweight. This is some gorgeous jazz drumming. Mela's rallied impressive guests, including tenor star **Joe Lovano** (with whom he's been gigging lately) and the astonishing guitarist **Lionel Loueke.** Mela's liberally open compositions serve his strong intuitive interplay well. Picture airy interactive drumming informed by the popping authority of Afro-Cuban drive and a hint of Brazilian rhythmic waves. Odd time signatures flow like speech—marvelous touch. And his straight-ahead percolates too. Never chaotic, the "free" element entrances. Remember the name; expect big things. (Ayva) **Jeff Potter**

ROCK STAR: SUPERNOVA

★★★

The highly anticipated recording by the group Supernova, who have officially changed their name to RockStar: Supernova because of a legal infringement issue, features Mötley Crüe's **TOMMY LEE**, Guns N' Roses' **Gilby Clarke**, Metallica's **Jason Newsted**, and winner of the lead-singer TV competition, **Lukas Rossi.** Producer Butch Walker leaves his trademark hit-making sound all over this disc, and though RockStar: Supernova is not going to change the world, their strong, melodic tunes will likely fill the airwaves. Tommy's playing here may represent his most commercial work ever: He plays exactly what's needed, and no more, making every track radio-friendly. (Epic) **Billy Amendola**

VOIVOD KATORZ

★★★

Fourteen albums and twenty-four years into the game, Canadian metal vets Voivod return with *Katorz*, featuring the guitar tracks of deceased guitarist Denis "Piggy" D'Amour. Drummer **MICHEL "AWAY" LANGEVIN**'s largely adheres to his parts, even when the songs move in a variety of phases. However, the cathartic, dissonant "No Angel" finds the drummer performing all over the rhythmic map (and also all over the kit). (The End Records) **Waleed Rashidi**

THE DEARS GANG OF LOSERS

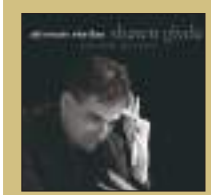
★★½

On their third album, *Gang Of Losers*, The Dears strip away their previous orchestrated sheen for a more urgent feel. Results are mixed. The clunky feel of "Ticket To Immortality," for instance, crumbles under **Murray Lightburn**'s towering tenor; despite sharp rhythmic twists from drummer **GEORGE DENOSO**, the band doesn't find the pocket. Elsewhere, they do, though, with Denoso thundering through smash 'n' grab rockers and adding muscle to pretty ballads without overplaying. (Arts & Crafts) **Patrick Berkery**

TAKING THE REINS

SHAWN GLYDE ALTERNATE RHYTHM

★★★★½



Alternate Rhythm is aptly titled. Fresno State drum instructor Shawn Glyde (with help from Yellowjackets bassist **Jimmy Haslip**) *burns* through insane odd-metered workouts, thankfully also focusing on composition. On "The Odd Temple," Glyde tastefully applies double bass and flams to parts in 4/4, 17/16, and 19/16. Extremely challenging and cerebral stuff. (www.shawnglyde.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

ALSO CHECK OUT

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Doubling Up by Michael Parillo

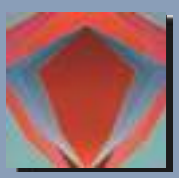
THE MELVINS A SENILE ANIMAL

★★★½

Thick and rich with the sound of two enormous drummers—that's right, **DALE CROVER** alone will no longer suffice—*A Senile Animal* raises The Melvins' stakes yet again. Like a swashbuckling Crover doppelganger, **COADY WILLIS** of the band Big Business fits right in by laying waste to every percussion piece in his path. The LP features a couple of sludgy tunes, a few faster numbers, and lots of head-spinning drum breaks. It's wild to find yourself laughing in amazement at such frightening stuff, but then those Melvins have always been a simultaneously scary and hilarious lot. Now they're just doubly so. (Ipecac)

TUSSLE TELESCOPE MIND

★★★½



Tussle's steady low-frequency thump can feel like bass seeping through your neighbor's walls, but for fans of rhythm-based music that's not necessarily a bad thing. *Telescope* alternates between instrumental space disco and tribal faux-Latin grooves that would be at home on Talking Heads' *Remain In Light*, with a few abstract passages thrown in for good measure. Dual drummers **JONATHAN HOLLAND** and **WARREN HUEGEL** sound of one mind and body, with a firmly bonded time feel and not a flammed stroke between them. Many of their patterns reflect mechanical precision, but at times they play more loosely and sound more organic. (Smalltown Supersound)

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Tommy Igoe's *"Groove Essentials"* is an encyclopedia of contemporary drum grooves, including 47 essential patterns with full explanations, performances and transcriptions— for all levels from beginner to professional.

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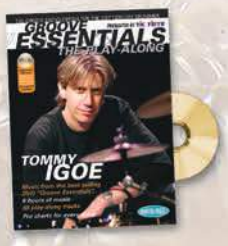

Tommy Igoe
Groove Essentials The Play-Along
124-pages with 88-Track audio CD

This play-along companion to Tommy Igoe's "Groove Essentials" DVD features charts, variations and tracks that will challenge and inspire players of all skill levels. Rated ★★★★★ by Modern Drummer magazine.

NEW!

David Garibaldi
The Code Of Funk
80-pages with audio CD and 2 DVD-ROMs

Tower Of Power's master drummer, explains and documents his legendary approach to drumming and then lets students "sit-in" with T.O.P. by playing-along with 8 complete tracks from the band's latest album, "Oakland Zone".

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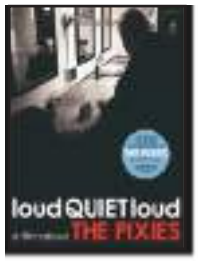
★★★★☆



This captivating documentary chronicling the Pixies' 2004 reunion tour proves that getting a band back together isn't always a lighthearted victory lap. People need money. People have substance abuse problems. People still don't communicate so well. With drummer **DAVID LOVERING** it's all of the above. Lovering plays the accidental lead for a spell, as he goes off the rails onstage, and is asked to curtail his self-medicating. Yet earlier in the film, he's bashing through "Caribou" like he's on cloud nine. That sequence gives the impression that even with financial hardships, Lovering would have done the reunion tour for free. (MVD) **Patrick Berkery**

DRUMS IN THE CHURCH BY MARC ANDERSON

DVD LEVEL: BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE $29.95

★★★½☆

With this informative DVD, Marc Anderson (Steve Tibbetts, Taj Mahal) demonstrates the peaceful co-mingling and coexistence of traditional church hymns and Latin, Irish, African, and Middle Eastern drumming styles (in different feels). Though Anderson moves briskly through some exercises (you'll press "review" on your disc player often), drummers of all walks should find insights into hand movements, finger formation, and garnering slap, muffled, bass, and open tones. It's all useful info to be applied to a variety of musical settings. (www.giamusic.com) **Will Romano**

CONTEMPORARY DRUMSET TECHNIQUES BY RICK LATHAM

BOOK / 4 CDS LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $29.95

★★★★☆

Latham's groundbreaking 1990 instructional text resurfaces with the inclusion of four CDs on which he performs each of the fifty-nine pages of exercises in an easy-to-follow format. The highly acclaimed book begins with accented rudimental 16th-note, 8th-note-triplet, and 16th-note-triplet variations to prepare the hands and feet before incorporating these patterns into interesting, useful drumset patterns. Many of these patterns hold up well in today's popular drumming market, especially for advanced hip-hop and metal grooves and fills. (Carl Fischer) **Mike Haid**

MY LATEST OBSESSION

NORFOLK & WESTERN'S **RACHEL BLUMBERG** ON **JOHN CONVERTINO**

OP8 is a collaboration between the amazing singer/violinist Lisa Germano and the band Giant Sand. I first heard their album *Slush* five years ago, and the whole thing blew me away, but especially the drumming. John Convertino's playing is so feely and lilting and melodic, and he's so good at understanding innately how to make drums interweave in a melodic and textural sense with the other instruments. And Convertino is great at balancing the cymbals, the tone of the kick, and his trademark stutter of the brushes on the snare—blending the musical ideas of jazz and punk rock! Every time I hear this record I want to run into my studio and record—and learn how to use brushes like Convertino!

Norfolk & Western's latest album is *The Unsung Colony*.

PRIMUS'S **TIM ALEXANDER**

A recent obsession of mine is a band that's been around for a while but I've just discovered, Pinback (featuring drummer Tom Zinser). A very cool sound, layers and subtleties. Very nice. Constant obsessions are Alice In Chains, Soundgarden, Sparta, Bob Marley, Clutch, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Pink Floyd, Queens Of The Stone Age, Radiohead, Phil Hendrie, Sonic Youth, XTC, and *The Office* (BBC version), all of which influence my approach.

Tim has been involved with a project called Fata Morgana. (Check myspace.com/fatamusic.) He's also been "recording, playing, engineering, and stressing" on a new project with Luis Maldonado. Primus's latest is called *They Can't All Be Zingers*.

STUDIO LEGEND **HAL BLAINE**

My latest obsession is an incredible young violinist who has blown my mind. Her name is Sarah Chang, you'll be hearing about her. I've never witnessed such passion on a musical instrument from such a young artist.

Hal Blaine has likely drummed on more hit records than any other drummer in history. "Since being inducted into two Halls Of Fame," says Hal, "and working with some of the finest composers and arrangers through the so-called golden era of recording, I feel that I've achieved my goals. Now it's time to spend some of my children's inheritance."

SIGNIFICANT REISSUES

BY MARTIN PATMOS

SOLOMON ILORI, ART BLAKEY

Every now and then the Blue Note record vaults issue some treasure that can't be ignored. The reissue of talking drum master **Solomon Ilori**'s *African High Life* album is in itself exciting, with moving examples of drum ensemble and highlife styles. Yet the nearly forty minutes of unreleased performances, which pair a drum ensemble with Ilori and a jazz quintet with **ELVIN JONES**, reveal some truly magical moments. Hearing Jones in the context of a drum ensemble is illuminating: Retaining his identity, he also blends effortlessly with the ensemble, and when soloing he uses space, rhythm, and power effectively. (Blue Note)

Of related interest is the reissue of **ART BLAKEY**'s *Holiday For Skins* sessions. One of four drum ensemble albums he made, this is where Blakey explored his knowledge of African rhythms and jazz. With drummers and percussionists including **PHILLY JOE JONES**, **SABU MARTINEZ**, and **RAY BARRETTO** on board, the rhythms are hot throughout. (BlueNote)

MD RADIO

To hear the artists reviewed in this month's Critique, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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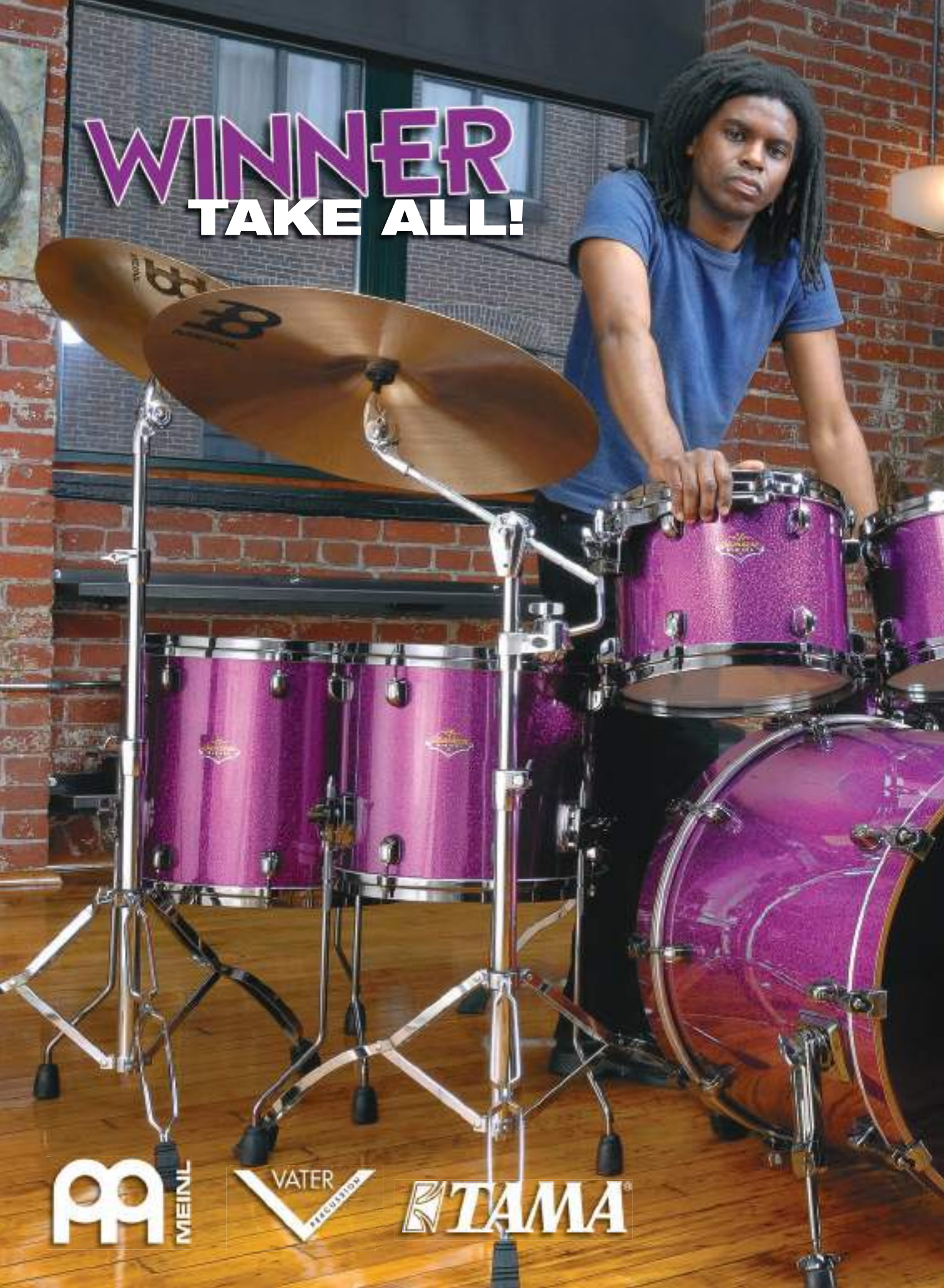
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BUBINGA+ GIVEAWAY

To help ***Rodney Holmes*** celebrate performing at ***PASIC 06*** and his great release, ***Twelve Months of October***, some of the companies whose gear Rodney plays and *Modern Drummer* magazine have joined in to give one very lucky winner a pile of great gear… cymbals from MEINL, sticks from VATER, all accompanying a complete TAMA Starclassic Bubinga set finished in Ultra Violet Sparkle. So why not join in the celebration? Read the rules, send in an entry and it could all be yours!

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MEINL: Byzance 22" Ping Ride, Byzance 16" Thin Crash, Byzance 10" Dry Splash, Byzance 16" China, Byzance 14" Dry Hi hats, 1 MCB22 22" Professional Cymbal Bag

VATER: 12 pair 5AW, 12 pair 5BW, 6 Slick Nut, 2 Buzz Kill, 1 Drink Holder, 1 Multi Pair Stick Holder, 1 pair Monster Brush, 1 pair Splashstick, 1 pair Splashstick Lite, 1 Vater Tee Shirt, 1 12" Chop Builder Split Surface Pad, 1 Vater Stick Bag

Consumer Disclosure: 1. To enter online, visit www.moderndrummer.com between the dates below and look for the Tama Contest button (one entry per household or email address) or send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, email address, and telephone number to: MD/Tama Giveaway, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish via postcard, but each entry must be mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 12/1/06 AND ENDS 2/28/07. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 2/28/07 AND RECEIVED BY 3/5/07. 5. Grand Prize Drawing: Winner will be selected by random drawing on March 12, 2007. Winner will be notified by phone or email on or about March 16, 2007. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Tama, Meinl, Vater, and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to residents of the US and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in Quebec, Canada, and where prohibited by law. 9. Prize: one (1) winner will receive from Tama: one (1) Starclassic Bubinga Series drum kit consisting of: one (1) BT1008BNUVS tom, one (1) BT1209BNUVS tom, one (1) BF1412BNUVS tom, one (1) BF1614BNUVS floor tom, one (1) BB2218BNUVS bass drum, one (1) BS1455BNUVS snare, two (2) HTC77WN combination stands, one (1) HC73BWN boom stand, one (1) HC72WN straight stand, one (1) HH905 hi-hat stand, one HP900P bass drum pedal and one (1) HS70WN snare stand. Approximate retail value: $6,933.00. From Meinl: one package of Byzance cymbals consisting of: one (1) B22R, one (1) B10, one (1) B16CH, one (1) pair 14" Dry Hi-Hats; and one MCB22 22" bag. Approximate retail value: $2010.00 From Vater: one (1) package of sticks and accessories consisting of: Twelve (12) pairs 5AW sticks, Twelve (12) pairs 5BW sticks, six (6) Slick Nut, two (2) Buzz Kill, one (1) Drink Holder, one (1) Multi Pair Stick Holder, one (1) pair Monster Brush, one (1) pair Splashstick, one (1) pair Splashstick Lite, one (1) Vater T-Shirt, one (1) 12" Chop Builder Split Surface Pad, one (1) Vater Stick Bag. Approximate retail value: $431.84. Approximate total retail value of the Tama, Meinl and Vater components: $9,374.84. 10. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 12. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winner's name, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Tama/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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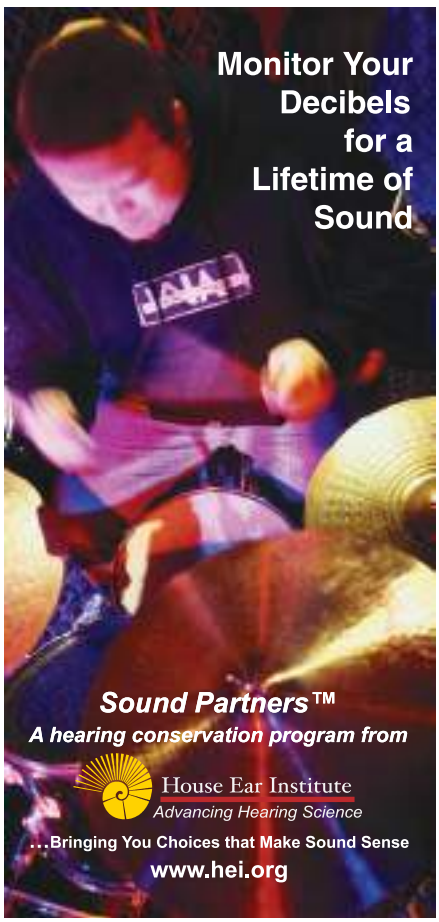

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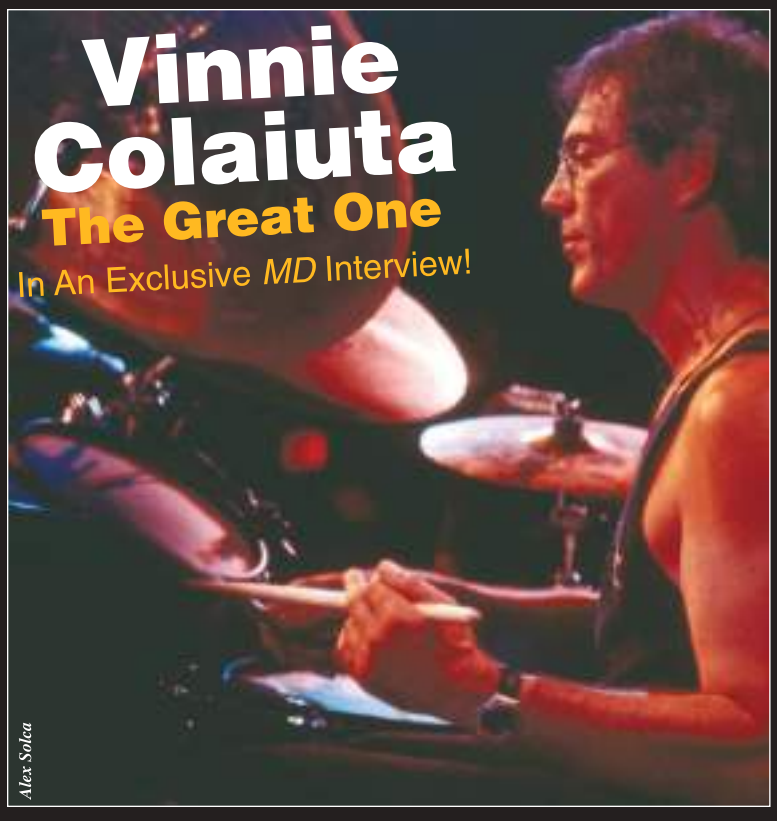

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Caught In The Web!
Buckcherry's Xavier Muriel

ProgPower USA VII

Mike Guy of Zero Hour

The seventh annual ProgPower USA festival was held this past September 15 and 16 at Center Stage Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. A sellout audience enjoyed top progressive metal bands from around the globe.

Pyramaze (Denmark) opened the show with melodic prog metal featuring the relaxed yet powerful double bass drumming of **Morten Sørensen**. Drummer **Thomas Nack** (Iron Savior, Gamma Ray) subbed for the ailing Thomen Stauch in Savage Circus (Germany), displaying excellent overall technique within the band's melodic modern metal set. Freak Kitchen (Sweden) was a crowd pleaser with their Zappa-esque odd-meter arrangements. The barefoot **Björn Fryklund** showed solid prog/fusion drumming chops and impressive speed.

The thrash metal sound of Mercenary (Denmark) was driven by **Mike Park**, who unleashed serious foot speed and vicious technique. Headliners Evergrey (Sweden) closed Friday's show with a two-and-a-half-hour set of melodic prog metal. **Jonas Ekdahl** displayed energetic chops, precision double bass work, and impressive hand speed throughout the lengthy set.

Zero Hour—the festival's only all-American band—kicked off Saturday's show. Drummer **Mike Guy** turned in a strong performance on material that was reminiscent of Queensrÿche. Italy's Vision Divine featured **Ricky Quagliato**'s blazing polyrhythmic foot technique and fluent

Vision Divine's Ricky Quagliato

"Wild" Willy Bendiksen of Norway's Jorn

Freak Kitchen's Björn Fryklund

Mike Park of Mercenary

rudimental chops over technically challenging Dream Theater–style music.

Mirka Rantanen of Thunderstone (Finland) was the first drummer of the weekend to perform a drum solo, exhibiting nice hand/foot combo fills and a strong groove. Dutch goth metal band Epica featured drummer **Jeroen Simons**, who played excellent broken double bass/tom fills with a relaxed polyrhythmic approach.

Festival closer Jorn (Norway) employed two drummers (playing at separate times). Veteran drummer **"Wild" Willy Bendiksen** showed all the young dudes what it meant to play fat musical fills and deep pocket grooves. Willy went on to perform an "old school" arena rock–style drum solo that brought the house down. Jorn's second drummer, **Stian Kristoffersen**, had a heavy, modern approach, with strong double bass technique.

All of the drummers shared a Pacific LXE Kurillian Birch kit mounted on a Pacific Super Rack with DW hardware. Additional festival sponsors included Sabian, Evans, and Shure. The event was filmed for DVD release. Check www.progpowerusa.com for details.

Story and photos by Mike Haid

International Drummers Week In Caracas

Caracas, Venezuela was the site of for The Second International Drummers Week this past October 5–8. **Randy Ebright** from the Mexican hip-hop/rock band Molotov, virtuoso technician **Mike Mangini**, and South American star **Luisito Quintero** were the featured clinicians. Also appearing were Venezuelan percussionists **Nelson Sardá**, **Carlos Nené Quintero**, **Dennis Vilera**, and event director **Frank Quintero**. Sponsors included Yamaha, Pearl, Paiste, and Latin Percussion.

Luisito Quintero

Randy Ebright

Roland Rhythm Experience In Toronto

Omar Hakim

The Toronto Music Expo, held this past September 30 and October 1, featured the Roland Rhythm Experience, an event focused on inspiring creativity in music through drums. Performers included groovesmith **Omar Hakim**, free-hand technique innovator **Johnny Rabb**, Toronto drumming sensation **Jeff Salem**, and up & coming extreme metal drummer **Chris Mezz**. Roland Canada's team of percussion specialists—including event emcee Darren Schoepp—gave demonstrations that went beyond the traditional drumkit and into the future of drums and percussion.

Inspired audience members could try out new ideas in a booth containing more than a hundred V-Drum kits and percussion stations. In that same booth each day Johnny Rabb gave lessons on sticking techniques using the Rhythm Coach Training System, while Jeff Salem led what was billed as Canada's first electronic hand drum circles, playing on the HandSonic 10 hand percussion pad. For more photos and video of the RRE, visit www.roland.ca/rhythm_experience/home.htm.

Johnny Rabb

Chad Smith At Modern Drummer Book Signing

Chad Smith (left) and MD managing editor Adam Budofsky

This past October 18, Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith visited the Sam Ash music store in Edison, New Jersey to sign copies of *The Drummer: 100 Years Of Rhythmic Power And Invention*, from Modern Drummer Publications. (Chad wrote the foreword for the book.) Joining Chad at the full-house event was the book's editor, *MD* managing editor Adam Budofsky.

The Drummer showcases historic and contemporary drumset masters, covering every major musical genre from early jazz to new metal. The book features hundreds of photos as well as candid quotes from the industry's heaviest hitters. *The Drummer* is available at bookstores and drumshops nationwide, and online at www.moderndrummer.com.

In Memoriam

Sandy West

Sandy West died this past October 21 after a long battle with lung cancer. West was a founding member of '70s rock band The Runaways, along with Joan Jett, Lita Ford, and Cherie Currie. The influential all-girl band toured the world several times, headlining with opening acts like Tom Petty and Cheap Trick. Their music has been included in dozens of rock and punk collections, has appeared in several feature films, and has been covered by bands from The Street Walkin' Cheetahs to Guns N' Roses.

After The Runaways broke up, West continued to perform as drummer, guitarist, and vocalist with The Sandy West Band. She also recorded an EP and numerous videos as a solo artist, and she enjoyed the adoration of a dedicated cult following.

Indy Quickies

AQUARIAN DRUMHEADS has opened a new manufacturing plant in Los Pinos, Mexico. All-new equipment with many high-tech features will allow the company to increase production while maintaining quality. The original Anaheim, California factory will continue to be the nerve center for sales and management.

DUNNETT CLASSIC DRUMS has acquired the intellectual property rights to the **George Way Drum Company**. Way is celebrated as one of the most important drum innovators of the early 20th century. His inventions include the free-floating snare drum, the self-aligning lug, and the parallel snare strainer. Dunnet plans to honor and build on George Way's legacy. For more information, call (604) 643-9939 or visit www.waydrums.com.

Veteran Denver, Colorado drummer **SKIP REEVES** hosts a radio program called *A Funk Above The Rest*. The show, which is broadcast to parts of Colorado and Wyoming on KUVO 89.3 FM, and to the rest of the world at www.kuvo.org, airs on Saturday nights from 11:00 pm to 1:00 am (MST). The playlist includes funk from the 1960s to the present. Artist interviews and "Skits Of Funk" are also regular features of the show.

For more photos from the events covered here, as well as additional news from the world of drumming, go to www.moderndrummer.com and click on "News/Events."

Who's Playing What

Mapex is now the exclusive provider of drumsets on the stages in all **B.B. King Blues Club** locations. Additionally, renowned blues drummer **Tony Coleman** has joined the Mapex roster of artists. Tony is the music director for B.B. King's Blues Clubs.

Studio and touring great **Matt Chamberlain** is now playing Istanbul Agop/Alchemy cymbals.

Brazilian prog/rock drummer **Aquiles Priester** (Angra) is a new Evans drumhead artist.

Acappella Drumsticks is now making a signature model for studio legend **Bernard Purdie**.

Drum & percussion ensemble **Recycled Percussion** is using the Trash Kat drum in their national tour across college campuses.

New Meinl cymbal endorsers include **Jost Nickel** (Jan Delay + Disko No. 1), **Paul Gifford** (One Flew Over), and **Trivett Wingo** (The Sword).

Recent Yamaha artists include **Nikki Glaspie** (Beyoncé), **Brian Vigilone** (Dresden Dolls), **Chris Vrenna** (Gnarls Barkley), **Mike Shapiro** (Sergio Mendes), **Xavier Muriel** (Buckcherry), **Chris Johnson** (Natalie Cole), **Chaun Horton** (Macy Gray), **Tony Escapa** (Ricky Martin), **Mike Jost** (Helmet), **Scott Mercado** (Candlebox), **Darren Pujalet** (Particle), **Alex Alexander** (Dido), **Donald Barrett** (Jesse McCartney), **Doug Belote** (Jerry Douglas), **Dave Brogan** (Animal Liberation Orchestra), **Glendon Crain** (Godhead), **Jeremy Furstenfeld** (Blue October), **Joey Hana** (Brandi Carlile), **Allen Maier** (Dropping Daylight), and **Brian Wolff** (Otep).

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A Find In Fiberglass

Jerry Jenkins of Thousand Oaks, California sent us the story of his garage-sale find. He bought the drums for the Ludwig hardware on them, to use in some other restorations he was doing. He walked away with 10", 12", 13", 14", 16", and 18" toms, and a 22" bass drum. There was no snare.

"Someone had wrapped the drums in a black covering," explains Jerry. "When I removed the hardware, I saw the Blaemire label inside the shells, as well as the distinctive green/yellow shell color. I remembered seeing Blaemire fiberglass shells back in the late 1970s, when I worked at Joe Voda's Drum City in Omaha. So I called Joe and asked about the shells. He told me the backstory on Al Blaemire's custom shell operation, and how a full set of Blaemire drums—especially a double-headed one—was rare."

Jerry decided to restore the kit. After he had the good fortune to find a Blaemire snare shell on eBay, he was ready to begin. "I had never worked with fiberglass," Jerry continues. "So I had to learn new techniques. After stripping the covering off the shells, I used 3M adhesive remover to soften the remaining glue, then sanded it while it was still wet. The glue balled up and rolled off. Next, I sanded the shells with 100-, 150-, and 220-grit sandpaper. I stopped there so the grain on the fiberglass would show. I wanted the drums to have a utilitarian look, as opposed to a super-glossy finish. I sealed the surface with clear satin spray lacquer."

When it came time to assemble the kit, Jerry wanted something different for the bass hoops. "I posted an inquiry on the DrumSmith Web site as to where I could find alternative bass hoops—aluminum, plastic, or fiberglass," says Jerry. "Paul Mason at Tempus offered to build a set. The hoops he created really set the drums off."

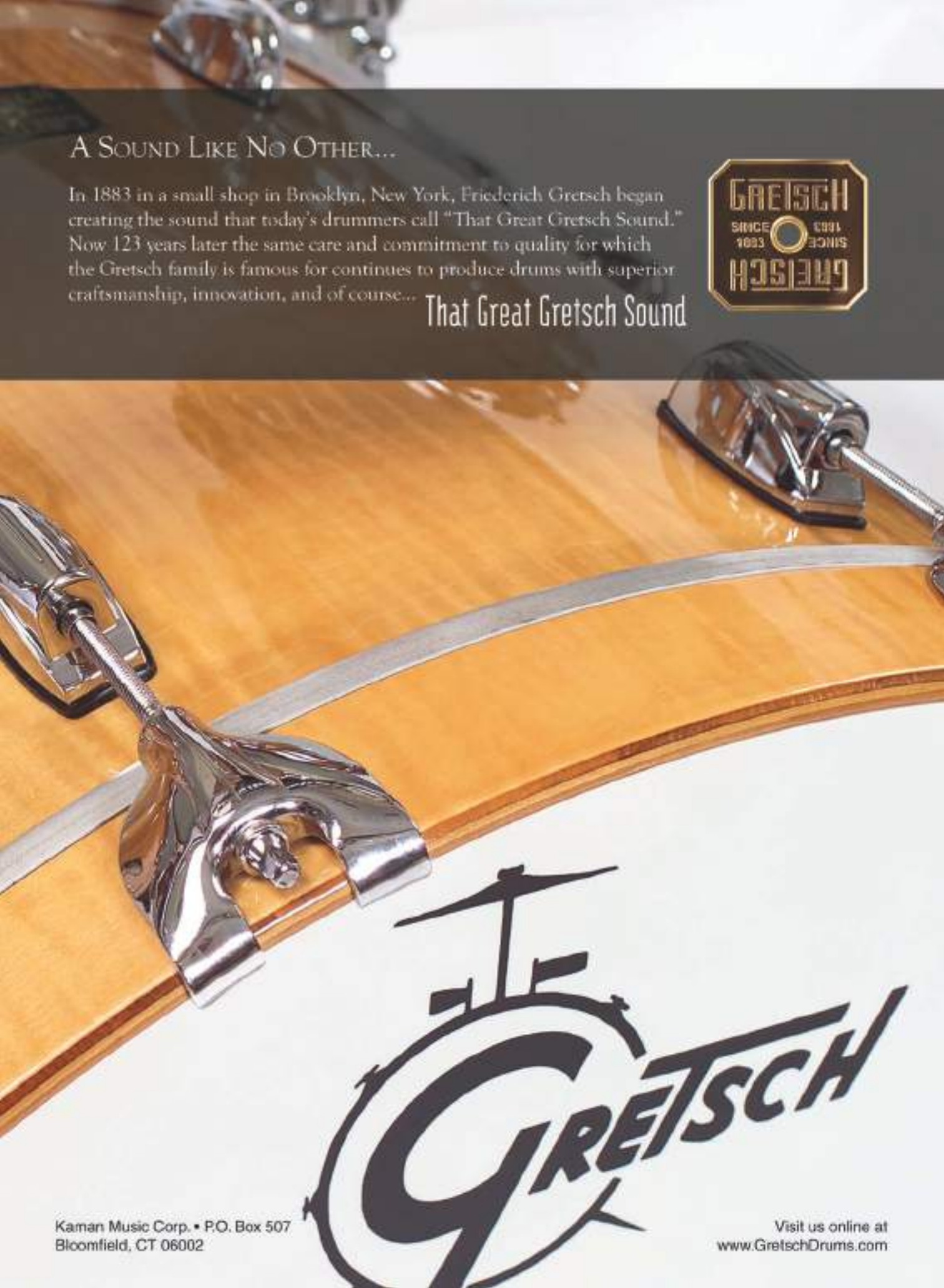
The bass drum and toms all use classic Ludwig hardware. The snare features a combination of S-hoops, Fat Cat snares, a Dunnett R-2 throw-off, and Ludwig-type tube lugs. Jerry added a Blaemire logo to the bass drum head to complete the look.

"The sound of these drums is unique," Jerry concludes. "They're very full, but not overpowering. They're also very sensitive, but they really open up when I lay into them. And the snare sounds huge."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.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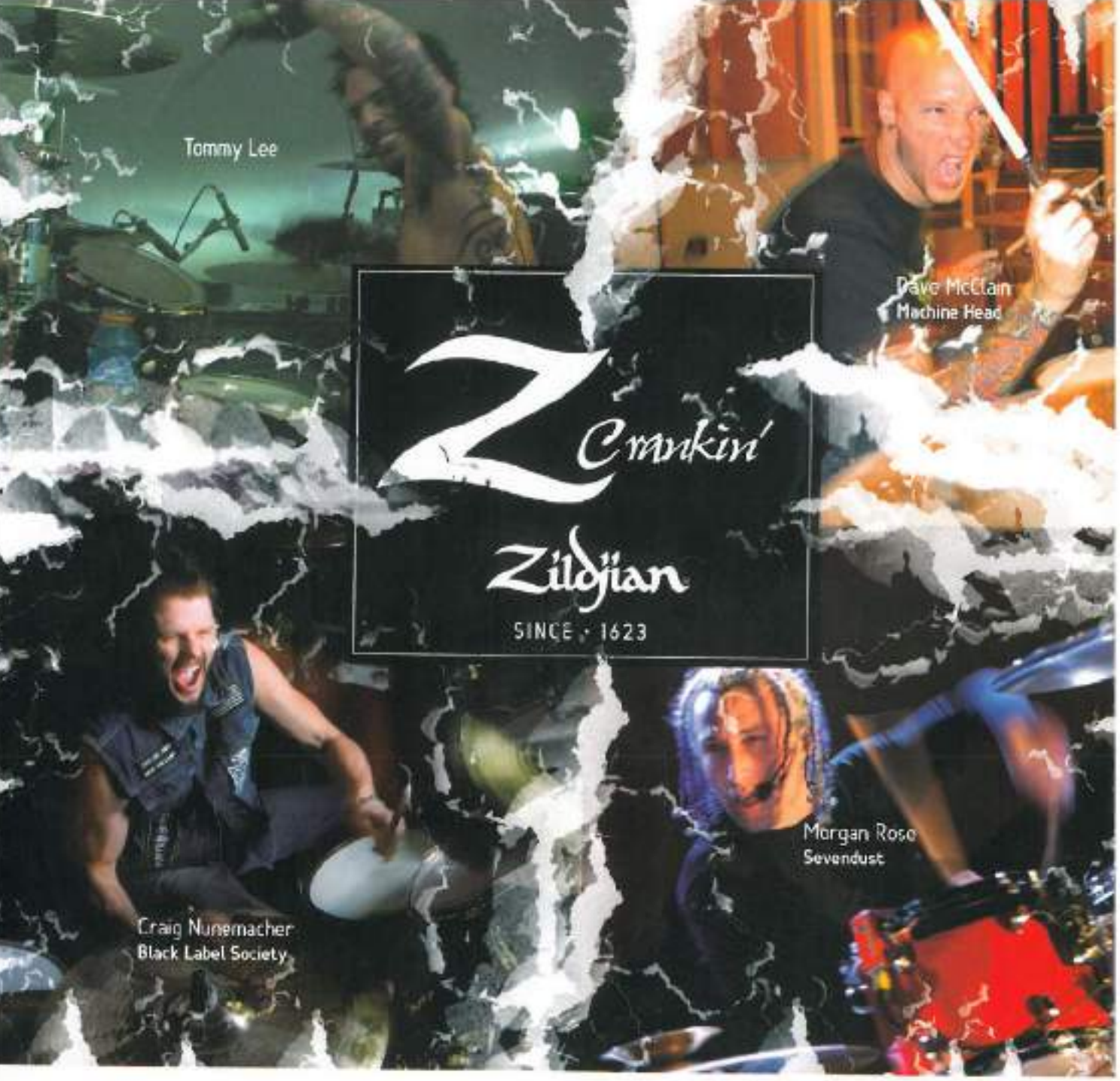

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